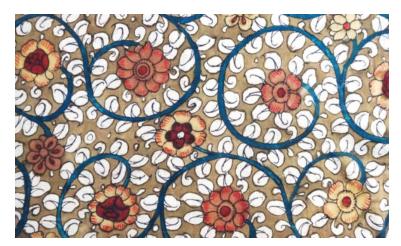




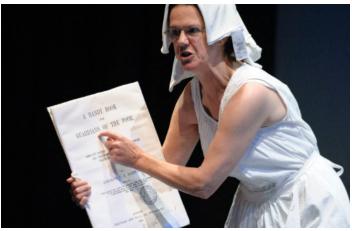
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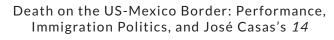
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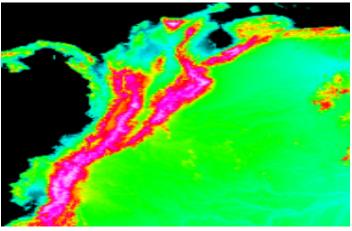
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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Introduction

Janelle Reinelt and María Estrada-Fuentes

ABSTRACT This special issue explores how best to use performance to leverage justice for victims of trafficking, child soldiers, illegal immigrants, the poor, and others who lack recognition and protection within the legal and social apparati of national governments and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This focus has emerged from a two-year research project on "Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance" between scholars in theatre and performance in collaboration with politics colleagues at University of Warwick, UK and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi.

Political responsibility is not about doing something by myself, however, it is about exhorting others to join me in collective action. -Iris Marion Young $\frac{1}{2}$

Following up on <u>Lateral 5.1</u>, which examined the stakes of cultural studies and urged the field to "be imagined into the future as deliberately politicized work," this special issue explores how best to use performance to leverage justice for victims of trafficking, child soldiers, undocumented immigrants, the poor, and others who lack recognition and protection within the legal and social apparati of national governments and some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This focus has emerged from a two-year research project on "Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance" between scholars in theatre and performance in collaboration with politics colleagues at University of Warwick, UK and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. We also reached out to likeminded US and Dutch authors to complete this issue.

We probe three critical overlapping arenas of effort to leverage justice: state agencies and NGOs providing support services and recovery programs to survivors; the policy arena where legislation and program designs originate; and representations of victims/survivors' experiences appearing in theatre, media, or other public venues. Of key concern is an analysis of how these practices interrelate to secure justice (or not) for target groups.

Performance resonates through several layers of this topic. The exploited themselves perform: first for their abusers, then later for their sponsors (e.g., funders, agencies, state agents). Attempts to aid survivors can incorporate performance as a therapy (such as Dance Movement Therapy with trafficked persons), and a number of performance groups create work in order to make visible the plight of the exploited and give voice to the silenced, using performance as a form of activism. However, the ethico-political problems entailed in these performances can be substantial: certain types can be coercive, unproductive, or even reproduce aspects of the original exploitation. Absence of a plurality of performances or alternative types of performance may in some cases diminish or impede justice. Organizations or agencies are often caught between their goals of aiding survivors and the legal, financial, or structural pressures under which they operate. Seeking justice for victims through performance thus entails a fluctuating proportion of costs and benefits which must be weighed.

To "leverage" justice is to invoke a metaphor that suggests multiple meanings: (1) to put pressure on existing systems and organizations in order to secure justice; (2) to employ "justice" as an organizing concept to influence public opinion, state legislation, and political action; or (3) to engage with an analysis of weights: as the "scales of justice" weigh the balance of competing elements of grievance, injury, responsibility, and redress to respond to the complexities of context and action, leveraging is an intentional 'weighing and weighting' of some persuasive and determining actions, arguments, or performances. Framing the issue through Iris Marion Young's social connection model of global responsibility, the issue asks with her, "how shall agents, both individual and organizational, think about our responsibility in relation to structural injustice?"

Here are some of the key questions that emerge in this issue:

- What contribution can performance make to public knowledge of, legal support for, and policy priorities regarding structural violence against women, children, and other vulnerable persons across a range of predicaments from poverty to trafficking?
- How do the complexities of different nation states and cultures complicate attempts to define the issues?
- What ethical considerations govern issues of witnessing and representation of survivors in artistic work? In public journalism or media?
- When artists work with these fragile and injured subjects, what protections are needed to ensure their privacy/security/dignity?
- When performances representing real events or situations circulate in the public domain, what problems emerge for the subjects and the performers?
- How do organizations negotiate the neoliberal market demands of governments and funding bodies to produce clear narratives of victimization and outcomes of survival success without compromising the often complex and ambiguous truths?
- How "joined up" are these questions for artists, scholars, and groups working on different specific issues (i.e. trafficking, homelessness, migration, child soldiers, domestic service exploitation, asylum)?

The materials collected here speak to each other in a variety of ways, and we hope readers will juxtapose the accounts they encounter to produce their own acts of leveraging. For example, the role of public memory and the redress it might offer is explored in relation to state systems of welfare for the poor in <u>Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield</u>'s contribution, which can be put in useful conversation with <u>Sofie deSmet and Marieke Breyne</u>'s essay on performances of grief and commemoration of the Marikana massacre in South Africa, and also with <u>Silvija Jestrovic</u>'s investigative elegy for a missing Indian domestic worker.

All three of their discussions stress the role of the body in making these memories, and here they link up with a number of other contributors who examine the political weight of embodied expression through surrogate bodies, e.g. Analola Santana, as well as verbatim or auto-biographical self-representations (Jimmy Noriega and Maggie Inchley). These pieces, in turn, circle back to Hughes and Waterfield, where Carran can be seen to stand in for her "Nana-in-hospital" and other members of her family, as well as for all poor women in the "Paupers' Concert." Emma Cox's analysis of the coding of queer bodies seeking asylum highlights choices made about the role of the body and how to represent it under deep surveillance. The body also figures substantively in all the contributions that focus on human trafficking and child soldiering, from descriptions of policy debates and policy implementation, to movement therapy as an approach to trauma (Janelle Reinelt, María Estrada-Fuentes, Urmimala Sarkar Munsi). The politics of theatrical fictions in Debra Castillo's trafficking essay extend and enrich this investigation of body aesthetics.

Anupama Roy has written widely on gendered citizenship in the Indian context. She was an important interlocutor throughout our project, and we are pleased to include her contribution in audio-essay form. "Polyrhythmic Citizenship" investigates the intelligibility of the concept of citizenship across different contexts, using music as analogy to explain how plurality can connect cultures across time without the claim to universality that so often accompanies theories of citizenship. Her engagement with leveraging justice takes place at the moment of Indian independence and in Delhi 2012 at the time of the public outcry over the gang rape of Jyoti Singh.

We complete the main part of this issue with "Delhi Dispatches." Here, we bring our readers two blog entries responding to the recent unrest at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) where state intervention by police and detention of students has been compounded by a hostile academic administration. The ongoing struggle of our JNU colleagues and students to challenge right-wing hyper-nationalism and to uphold academic freedom concludes the section with a demonstration of leveraging justice through direct activism.

We also wanted to include what we've learned working with two NGOs that use art practices to help trafficking survivors recover, and also to highlight several other activist practices that we have encountered in our work. To that end, we have included an "Appendix" (although in an online source that is less linear in navigation than a print volume, this may seem a bit quaint!). The Appendix brings together an interview with Sohini Chakraborty, Director of Kolkata Sanved, about the history and practice of the NGO with two annotated slide shows, one from Sanved, and one from California-based ARM of Care. These two presentations are used by the organizations to educate the public about trafficking and about the role of movement and art in working with victims of trauma, building survival skills. We think that "leveraging" is a useful concept in this kind of work as practitioners search for the best ways to speak to the general public and also to funders and state agencies to whom they are sometimes responsible.

We have wanted to take advantage of all the technical possibilities of online publication that *Lateral* offers and are therefore pleased to include two photo essays, a link to an audio lecture, and the two annotated slide shows—in addition to a lot of visual material in support of the other pieces. We hope these features will enrich your experience and lead you to creatively weigh the perspectives and options you will be seeing, hearing, and reading about. There are some tensions among these materials as well as some striking convergences, and we hope you will be provoked to imagine alternatives as you weigh up the options and choices on offer to decide for yourselves how best to leverage justice.

In lieu of a Table of Contents (since these contributions form a web of associations more than a linear order), we have included these editors' notes at the beginning of the issue, suggesting what other pieces within the issue could be productively considered together.

Notes

- 1. Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 93. 2
- Stefanie A. Jones, Eero Laine, and Chris Alen Sula, "Editors' Introduction:
 Disciplinary Stakes for Cultural Studies Today," Lateral 5, no. 1 (2016),
 http://csalateral.org/wp/issue/5-1/introduction-disciplinary-stakes-cultural-studies-today/.
- 3. Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance was a two-year project involving roughly equal numbers of faculty and graduate students from Warwick and JNU, and included selected other UK and Indian colleagues as well, totaling about

twenty participants. It was funded by UKIERI (UK-India Education and Research Commission, UK), and UGC (University Grants Commission, India) on their "Thematic Partnership" scheme, with additional support from both universities. It ran from 2014–2016. A collection of essays under the project name will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017, edited by Bishnupriya Dutt, Janelle Reinelt, and Shrinkhla Sahai. For more information on the project, visit the website https://genderedcitizenshipandperformance.wordpress.com.

4. Young, 95.



Janelle Reinelt

Janelle Reinelt is Emeritus Professor of Theatre and Performance at University of Warwick. Her recent books include *The Grammar of Politics and Performance*, edited with Shirin Rai (2014), and *The Political Theatre of David Edgar: Negotiation and Retrieval* (2011) with Gerald Hewitt. She was President of the International Federation for Theatre Research from 2004-2007, and received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society for Theatre Research in 2010. She has been co-PI with Bishnupriya Dutt on the Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance research project.



María Estrada-Fuentes

María Estrada-Fuentes is an Early Career Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Warwick. Her research interests are conflict transformation, peace-building, applied theatre, politics and performance. She has worked with government institutions and NGOs implementing theatre, dance and performance practice in the social reintegration of ex-combatants in Colombia. Her publications include "Performing Bogotá: Memories of an Urban Bombing" (in Performing Cities, ed. Nicolas Whybrow, 2014), and "Becoming Citizens: Loss and Desire in the Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Colombia" (in Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance, eds. Bishnupriya Dutt, Janelle Reinelt and Shrinkhla Sahai, forthcoming 2017).



Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, "Sing For Your Supper: Pauperism, Performance, and Survival," *Lateral 5.2* (2016).

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Sing For Your Supper: Pauperism, Performance, and Survival

Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield

ABSTRACT Come what may the house enables us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world.1 This essay presents a piece of performance research that brought together a theatre-maker/performer and a theatre researcher to explore the relationships between theatre and poverty. Our collaboration was just one part of a broader research project, [...]

Come what may the house enables us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world. $\frac{1}{2}$

This essay presents a piece of performance research that brought together a theatremaker/performer and a theatre researcher to explore the relationships between theatre and poverty. Our collaboration was just one part of a broader research project, led by Jenny Hughes, that examined contemporary theatre initiatives in sites of poverty and economic insecurity, and that also undertook a historical study of theatre's engagements with the poor. ² The use of performance practice as a research method, represented by our collaboration, is common in theatre and performance studies. During our research, this involved the use of techniques from the field of devised performance to engage imaginatively with fragments of information drawn from historical archives, aspects of autobiographical experience, and contemporary accounts of welfare. Practice-based research generates knowledge from working in creative and embodied ways with real and imagined objects, experiences and subjects placed in relationship and dialogue with each other. It can lead to written outputs, as in the reflection that follows here, as well as knowledge and understanding wholly produced and disseminated as performance—in the form of a piece of theatre, or as rough improvisations in the rehearsal room. Our practicebased research took place over two years and led to a solo performance called *The House*, performed by Carran Waterfield to audiences at four different sites between November 2015 and January 2016.

Carran is an independent theatre-maker and trained teacher who—as she does with *The House*—creates performances inspired by her family history. Alongside this autobiographical work, Carran has led a range of experimental and educational theatre projects, both independently and as part of the award-winning performance company, Triangle Theater. Working from a Poor Theatre tradition that privileges the performer's voice and body as a primary medium (dispensing with extraneous theatrical or technological input), Carran's performances create intimate encounters between performer and audience, an approach that combined well with our research imperative here, especially when complemented by the use of solo performance, with its demand that the performer expose herself to vulnerability and risk.

Jenny Hughes is a University researcher and teacher with a history of working in applied and social theatre, and at the time of this collaboration was leading a research initiative exploring theatre and poverty. The selection of performance as a research tool arose from a desire to understand the relationship between the performing body, poverty, and economic inequality, as part of a broader investigation of the political economies of theatre and performance practice. Performance was employed to examine both the experience of poverty and the visual and embodied regimes in which the poor have to appear in order to access social support. These visual and embodied regimes, often stigmatizing and limiting, are reproduced across the contexts of social welfare, including inside social theatre practice.

Built around ten photographs depicting an imagined and theatricalized "pauper concert," a concert performed by and in aid of the poor, this essay provides an overview of the research process and its outcome. The pauper concert, staged in a Victorian workhouse that becomes a contemporary employment agency, was the central theatrical motif of *The* House. "Pauper," a word prevalent in the Victorian period, refers to those in need of public support—government aid or charity—because they do not or cannot earn a living through their labor. The photographs provide an insight into Carran's autobiographical story, an important source for the research, with her family ancestry (as we discovered during the process) featuring engagements with systems of welfare dating back to the UK's New Poor Law of 1834. Carran also drew on her experiences of growing up on a social housing estate in Coventry in the 1970s and her working life as a freelance theatre-maker in the decades that followed. It is worth noting at the outset that our shared experiences of growing up in family contexts characterized by economic hardship—of not having enough to go around—was a subject of repeated conversation between the two authors, and provided an important frame through which we reflected on research materials arising from interviews with welfare professionals and activists, visits to archives and workhouses, and work-in-progress viewings. Mirroring the importance of such conversations in our collaboration, the essay is presented as two voices engaged in dialogue, other than in this introduction and the conclusion, where our voices are combined. We hope that this approach shows how our distinct research modalities informed the investigation.

The research traversed a connected array of times and spaces, different "houses" of welfare, and mapped these onto clues left in memories and archives relating to the female lineage in Carran's family. In his exploration of the resonances of the word "house" for theatre, Marvin Carlson draws on a biblical citation to support his observation that "the theatre—though home to few—has for centuries been a house for the multitudes...the theatre seeks to come as close as any human institution to the term in which Job describes Heaven itself: 'the house of meeting for all living.'" Carlson's evocation of the house of theatre, considered in the light of Gaston Bachelard's suggestion that images of the house express dreams of shelter, stability, and intimacy for human life, is extraordinarily resonant for our reflection. ⁵ The citation Carlson uses here is from the Book of Job in the Old Testament, which tells the story of Job, a wealthy and devout citizen who, by order of god, is stripped of everything of value and cast into the wilderness, exposed to disease and hunger, living with and humiliated by the most excluded orders of society. Through his ordeal, Job learns of the presence of god in places of suffering, cruelty and death. The phrase "house of meeting for all living," from Job's monologue at the heart of the story, is a desperate exclamation of faith in the face of abject dispossession. This dream of a house as a place of exposure and shelter for all, and Carlson's suggestion that theatre offers such a dream, evokes our critical exploration of the capacity of theatre to create points of encounter with the diverse shapes and forms of life that constitute the disavowed underpinnings of the economic order. The dreams of

the house that follow move from the house as place of work and mobilizer of economic growth to the house as shelter for vulnerable life; from the house of theatre as a site of disciplined performance to the house of theatre as refuge for assorted forms of life. By placing the body of a female performer at the center of a pauper concert inside such houses—what kind of "meeting for all living" is materialized? What points of tension between the body and economies of care become identifiable? What relationships between theatre and the economic domain emerge, and how do these mediate between forms of social life and social death?

In our search for a relationship between theatre, performance, and poverty that might contribute to understanding theatre's role in leveraging social and economic justice, we encountered troubling but also hopeful outcomes. We found that performance is problematically implicated in disciplinary measures that continue to make precarious the lives of those people unable to "perform" in accordance with the exclusionary discourses of good citizenship embedded in liberal and neoliberal economic regimes Z. Here, performance plays a role in maintaining the *appearances* of justice. However, theatre can also trigger affects that are in excess of its appearances, and provide opportunities for affective encounters with a diffusely shaped social body that is fluid, multitudinous and made up of radically equal parts. Here, performance contaminates, traverses categories and limits, personalizes and inspires—opening up convivial, intimate, and playful spaces for encounter. Perhaps performance does not leverage justice in a direct way, but it can create affective spectacles that determinedly position the spectator inside rather than outside a network of relations with the economically excluded other.

1. The "Home Kids," 1944



Figure 1. The "home kids" at Eastward Ho, 1944. Photograph courtesy of Mary Wade.

Carran: This image shows a group of girls living in Eastward Ho, Stowmarket children's home in Suffolk in 1944. The children are having their photograph taken and are in various states of readiness for photographic capture. Some are stood on the ground, some on a tree trunk. Someone is standing to attention, someone else is sucking her thumb, others are running round. The children are all wearing uniformed pinafores and holding gifts. Three soldiers stand behind the girls. One of these might have handed out the gifts. My mum is the fifth from the left standing on a tree trunk and so higher up, to the side of the soldiers. She's the one with black curly hair.

Her mum—my grandmother—had admitted herself into what was referred to literally and in the local imagination as the workhouse. It was in fact a former workhouse turned into a

hospital in the 1930s. My grandmother gave birth to my mum there around nine years before this photo was taken. Mum spent her formative years in a variety of children's homes and my grandmother—who we called "Nana-in-hospital"—spent most of her life in institutional care, suffering bouts of mental distress before and after the birth of my mum.

The children in the home, known locally as "home kids," would put on regular concerts for the soldiers, who brought them chocolate. Mum said that the chocolate was kept in a cupboard and not given to the children until it had gone off. Tommy, the Assistant Matron, ran a regime of cruelty and she was the one who trained the children for the concerts, organizing each concert in military style and making the girls sing with nails in their mouths during one party piece. The soldiers were American, from a military base nearby, and they were always visiting. Each soldier "adopted" a girl and on this occasion mum's soldier had not turned up so she was cross, she says. You will see she is frowning. It was sports afternoon. I asked mum if the children did a concert for the soldiers that day. She said "we were always doing bloody concerts." Mum said that the matron used to be really nice to them in front of the soldiers but was horrible when no one was there.

2. Dearnley Workhouse (2015 [1877])



Figure 2. Dearnley Workhouse in 2015. Photograph courtesy of Jenny Hughes.

Carran: During the research, I visited Dearnley Workhouse (later Birch Hill Hospital) in Rochdale, a small town in Lancashire (UK), as well as other workhouse sites. I used the straight lines you can see in the architecture of the workhouse-corridors, rows of windows, working from shifts in perspective and scale created by the height and sightlines of these structures. The workhouses are so massive in relation to the human form, they make you small, and it must have been terrifying to look up at them, especially for a child. I worked with the terror of being a little person in this huge place, with its corridors and keys. My movements became institutionalized. To find points of physical and emotional connection to the building, I went to the "workhouse" every day to do my job and I found that both inside and outside the rehearsal room I was walking down corridors or going through a particular door in the same way because that was what my work demanded. Even the porters in the university, the location of the rehearsal room, formed part of my imaginary workhouse world as I requested rooms to be unlocked. I carried heavy props from room to room, becoming my own porter. The world of the workhouse fused with the university institution, and both buildings became collaborators in the research. When I carried all my gear I allowed myself to feel that the actual porters were not pulling their weight. It began to help my process that I was alone and "helpless" and it was not a big leap of the imagination to find a role for Jenny as "my visitor" in that world.

We met people who remembered Dearnley when it was still close to a workhouse in operation and had experienced its transformations through the twentieth century,

providing human voices connecting the rich fabric of this transforming building. These voices provided a layer of oral history that combined with voices from my own family history.

Jenny: Dearnley Workhouse is a larger version of the workhouse Carran's mother was born into, but connected to the same history of welfare. The building, originally opened in 1877 to accommodate 900 paupers and described as a "credit and an ornament" to the town, is a fine example of the Victorian workhouse. Architecturally spectacular, the Victorian workhouse represented the first centralized system of welfare in England, and it aimed to encourage habits of work in the able-bodied poor whilst improving standards of care for the frail, abandoned, orphaned, and disabled.

The New Poor Law of 1834, which triggered the Victorian program of workhouse building, supported the historical emergence of a competitive labor market required by new modes of industrial work. Here, the poor were expected to act as self-sufficient economic agents, with public aid a last resort. As Mary Poovey notes, the New Poor Law introduced "disciplinary individualism as the normative model of agency" and demanded "a peculiar form of self-government from the poor." 10 The New Poor Law also introduced the workhouse test, whereby entrance to the workhouse became the only form of social support on offer, with conditions in the workhouse "less eligible" than the houses of the self-sufficient, laboring poor. Workhouses prevented "moral contagion" by separating paupers into classes according to age, gender, and fitness to work, with a regime of time and place crafted to encourage habits of work and good character through the performance of closely monitored and monotonous forms of labor. The Victorian workhouse is a legislative and material architecture of importance in the history of welfare, including the histories of social theatre. In the decades following its opening in 1877, for example, Dearnley Workhouse became a site for fledgling kinds of social theatre practice that often mapped onto new discourses of work, subjectivity, and identity. 11

Part of a rash of interventions into the lives of the poor in the nineteenth century, the New Poor Law helped to conceive the idea of the social arena as a distinct entity, separate from the economic and political domain, what Poovey describes as a "social body." The "social body" is founded on a separation of the poor, who are included as an isolated part, held in a state of specular and conditional relation to the whole: "The phrase social body therefore promised full membership in a whole (and held out the image of that whole) to a part identified as needing both discipline and care." 12 For Poovey, this social body was a domain in which appearance and the visual became epistemologically dominant, with statistical and scientific methods of observation and accounting legitimizing "ocular penetration" into the lives of the poor. $\frac{13}{2}$ This led to the marginalization of the body and its stories as an authoritative basis for knowledge, and its replacement with numerical measures that enabled "every phenomenon to be compared, differentiated, and measured by the same yardstick." 14 The impersonal administrative machinery of the New Poor Law was a particularly stark example of such measures. However, Poovey also argues that the representation of gender often produces a "fault" in the social body "that exposes the contradictions among rationalities and domains." 15 This can be seen in the ways that poor women, particularly single women with children, seen by Poor Law legislators as partly responsible for the newly visible mass of poor reliant on the public purse, became "malleable icons" in the citizenship contests of this period. On the one hand, single mothers were fraudulent, immoral, and in need of rectifying interventions and on the other, they were seen as innocent and defenseless victims of new economies of austerity. 16

Our research, which imagined and dramatized the performances of poor women engaging with welfare, traced such points of tension in the social body, revealing their political and

economic underpinnings, and their stakes for social life. The resonances of the word "house" are interesting here, as they help identify a strange juncture of fault-lines associated with discourses of female productivity. This juncture is characterized by interweaving discourses of over-productivity (women, as reproductive agents, create a surplus of life), scarcity (women, in their under-productivity or over-productivity—take your pick—are a drain on the economy), and absence (women provide the invisible labor that mobilizes the prosperity of an economy). Interestingly, the etymological root of the word "economy," oikos, refers to "household management," an economic system famously explored by Aristotle in *The Politics*, and in a way that reveals the tensions in the social domain created by the female body especially vividly. For Aristotle, the household represents an ideal economy, as it is a system that produces necessary and useful objects rather than accumulates through speculation. Aristotle's account of this ideal economy, however, is founded on an extended justification of slave labor and there is also a fleeting mention of its reliance on the subservience of women. ¹⁷ The Aristotelian dream of the house, then, relies on a disavowal of the work of the body and on cancelling the possibility of prosperous life for a mass of bodies. The workhouse dream, with its sparse rooms and disciplinary lines, supports the survival of a reserve army of labor, but exposes those bodies to humiliation, subjection, and work, eliminating spaces for conviviality and intimacy (at least in official discourses of the Poor Law). In the workhouse—and in contemporary houses of welfare—the dream of shelter is inflected by a demand to perform worth according to narrow measures of economic value. As we will see, this dream regularizes forms of social death, but also materializes performances in excess of itself, in which bodies seek more reciprocal relations with space and inchoate life leaks at borders.

3. Nana-in-hospital, singing (1971)



Figure 3. "Nana-in-hospital," singing. Photograph courtesy of Carran Waterfield.

Carran: This is my Nana-in-hospital singing in 1971—notice her shiny scarf, her pearl necklace, and the flowers on her hat. This photograph was taken at Christmas in her sheltered accommodation, Beech House, where she moved from the hospital. The popular light entertainer Roy Hudd used to attend some of the events organized by Beech House. 18 Nana loved singing and during the research, I became attracted to the idea that at the end of the day if you have lost everything you have not lost your imagination or your singing voice.

My mum encouraged us to attend a Non-Conformist Wesleyan Chapel with a strong tradition of singing and amateur dramatics. We learnt anthems and songs with parts. The posh people played in the small orchestra and the children, many of us from the social housing estate, sang in the choir for the Sunday School Anniversary, an annual celebration when everyone got new clothes. The chapel was a place for social mixing, an equalizer. Stricter people in the congregation had problems with "radical" forms of worship like dancing and acting because they drew attention to the body and so displayed the ego. However, singing was always embraced. This meeting of the concert turn and chapel worship also happens in *The House*. When I look at this photograph what I notice is the sparkle of Nana's scarf and wonder whether sparkle and singing marked freedom or escape for her.

We move now to reflect on the performance itself, starting with an introduction to four personas who took shape over the course of the work in the rehearsal room. The audience meet these three personas early in the performance, and each, in her own way, sets the stage for the pauper concert that follows.

Hello. Welcome. Well, I think we can say that the house is well and truly open. It's a good turn out. I'm very pleased that you've all turned out so well.

4. The Pauper Portress



Figure 4. The Pauper Portress (the remaining photographs feature characters from The House, all played by Carran Waterfield). Photograph courtesy of Joel Chester Fildes.

Carran: The Pauper Portress, in a strict, matter of fact way, greets the audience and sets the space for the pauper concert. She fetches and carries. She is in the system and of the system. A pauper who has become part of the furniture—literally, she carries it—the Pauper Portress has worked her way up and now works for "them," the authorities on the other side, because "if you can't beat the system, just join the system." Presenting the best face of the institution, she is disciplined, workful, a demonstration of the regime's success. The audience witness her regular and routine work on behalf of the institution. She's the rule-reader, playing everything by the book, but there is also an occasional hint of defiance —a mock bow or grimace that she never allows the powers-that-be to see. There is a terror in her and of her, and a sense that she could be violent if she needed to be. At the opening of the performance she is holding all the cards, and threatens to subject the audience to sharing the burden of her work.

In the performance, the Pauper Portress organizes the audience into three groups: the charitable rich, the deserving poor, and the undeserving poor. She initiates two onstage traverse audience groups—the deserving and undeserving poor—into the workhouse regime. She instructs them to stand and fires questions concerning their names, birthplaces and date of last attendance. There was no requirement for the audience to say

anything: they simply stood whilst subjected to the initiation, watched by the offstage audience of the charitable rich. The aim here was to imagine and conjure the feelings of a pauper entering the system for the first time.

5. The Funraiser



Figure 5. The Funraiser/Fundraiser. Photograph courtesy of Joel Chester Fildes.

Carran: The Funraiser allowed me to retain the connection with the audience, by turning to address the charitable rich, framed as official visitors and potential benefactors. The Funraiser/Fundraiser is a charity entrepreneur. She welcomes the guests and asks them to contribute to the fun/fund-raising effort. She is deeply patronizing. Keen to show that the money is being spent well she describes the importance of the institution's three-step improvement program that moves from levels one to three of "the work," which some of the paupers demonstrate in the concert. Hailing from the great and the good, she is the enterprising patron wheeled out at important events. She is titillated by encounters with those on the other side of society. She does not have to work for a living and owns plenty of posh dresses but wears a cheap tee shirt and cap, on sale during the pauper concert as part of the fund-raising effort, to show that she really cares about the poor.

6. The Matron



Figure 6. The Matron. Photograph courtesy of Joel Chester Fildes.

Carran: The Matron of the workhouse recently lost her husband and is about to be redeployed. She wants to better herself and is studying Poor Law administration in the hope of becoming, like the Funraiser/Fundraiser, one of the Guardians of the poor. She has worked at the coalface of the institution but she knows that is not enough—she is not from the elite and so would not look right around the Guardian's table. She both fears and pretends to embrace her potential scrap-heap demise by being reticent to take the platform herself, yet at the same time ensures that the paupers put on a good show. Almost despite herself, Matron sings a Christian song for the concert—"As the Deer Pants"—a modern Christian hymn, and this moment begins the process of transition from the Victorian era to the present-day. However, the Christian song reveals to her the problem that she has, in that she toes the line about a conventional marriage contract, of being subservient to her husband, and finds she cannot exist on her own in a man's world. She knows that the next pay check is the last one. In response, the Matron stands on the master's table, and, by inserting her own words into the hymn, creates a picture of a world in which—as Jenny says—all are equal and queer kinds of caring relationships abound. Jenny describes this as a moment of utopic abandonment during which the world of order falls apart—I agree, but could not have said it in the same way.

7. The Data Protector/Accountant



Figure 7. The Data Protector/Accountant. Photograph courtesy of Joel Chester Fildes.

[Carran?:] The Data Protector/Accountant collects evidence of effectiveness, and ensures that the money in the house is well spent. She appears in the contemporary and historical contexts of welfare in the performance, moving from nineteenth century book-keeper, associated with the ledgers of old workhouses, to twenty-first century hybrid of accountant, health and safety officer, social worker and archivist. She controls the records and keeps them up to date, making cuts where necessary, ensuring that everything adds up and appearances are maintained. She keeps the house in line with quality benchmarks. In many senses, she is a figure of cruelty, the "magpie" to the more emotional figure of the matron, and she is concerned about the "pigeons," the gutter people—strutting about the streets, "on the make, trying to get something for nothing." Data Protector/Accountant is a new kind of Master, heralding the changes in welfare practices to come, a kind of Chancellor of the Exchequer brandishing scissors that threaten to cut "some ... maybe ... some ... maybe," poking at the inmates/visitors/audience. Both Matron and Data-Protector/Accountant sing the same tune: "there's just too many of them" observes Matron when explaining the problem of the casuals—freelancers, self-employed, migrant workers. The Data-Protector/Accountant emerges from the workhouse ledger, born out of Matron's rib, delivering herself onto her office chair with a thump. She shrieks as she motors around the space wielding her manifesto of calculated cuts and punitive sanctions. She wages war on the poor. Her starting assumption is that the paupers get more than they deserve and her role is to ascertain evidence of need and monitor the efficacy of the program of improvement in the house. In the piece the slippage between Data-Protector and Matron is keenly worked, and it forms a point of transition from past to present.

Jenny: Welfare regimes in the global North, the context for this research, mobilize technologies of citizenship that produce a narrow spectrum in which the poor must appear, and performance is a medium by which those technologies of citizenship are enforced and resisted. Demanding that the poor appear as economically productive bodies in suspension or in the making, welfare regimes create conditions on appearance that construct what I have come to call a "performance-poverty bind" capturing both recipients and disseminators of welfare in cycles of performance, which in turn mobilize evermore pernicious forms of economic inequality. On the one hand, there are demands for performances of self-entrepreneurship, self-care, and self-investment—the presentation of self as an autonomous and creative unit, in the process of "moving on" into profitable life. On the other—there are demands for "authentic" exhibitions of self as damaged goods—as unfit for work, as bodies that do not work. At both ends of the spectrum, the poor are constructed as in need of civilizing interventions, interventions that may include arts and theatre projects. Here, a female performer—Carran—inhabits the performance-poverty bind, and imagines and embodies modes of self-presentation that reproduce as much as trick and expose the technologies of citizenship that call the poor into appearance.

Taken together, the four characters introduced above describe the technology of citizenship in the house, which moves from caring to punitive forms of discipline with their inherent demands to perform. The characters set the scene for the pauper concert, the specular platform on which the paupers later appear, each trying—and failing—to demonstrate their successful completion of the program of improvement. In her study of welfare agencies in the US through the 1990s, Barbara Cruikshank explores how welfare programs "work on" our capacity to act on our own behalf, via a "will to empower." The poor are subject to "empowering" interventions that rectify "deficiencies" in "self-acting" energies, but this appeal to act voluntarily in our own interest is also a coercive demand. 19 Each turn in the pauper concert holds these "empowering" interventions, with their infusions of coercion and self-agency, up to view. But here, the Pauper Portress's

exaggerated performance of acquiescence, the Funraiser's parody of the "will to empower," and the Matron's ecstatic hymn, materialize self-acting energies that also create fractures in the smooth performances of good citizenship that, as the performance proceeds, collapse into outright chaos.

What is notable about the social domain in which contemporary welfare programs exist is the replacement of discourses of empowerment with the precarious performances of self demanded by contexts of economic neoliberalism. Wendy Brown shows how, with neoliberal forms of economic governance, the "citizen" becomes "an intensely constructed and governed bit of human capital tasked with improving and leveraging its competitive positioning and enhancing its (monetary and non monetary) portfolio value across all of its endeavors and venues." 20 Here, those engaged in welfare regimes are no longer citizens working for or receiving from the common good, nor are they simply creative or entrepreneurial "self acting" agents. They are also, and predominantly, investment portfolios, focused on developing modes of "self care" and "self appreciation" based on speculations of future value. 21 For Brown, this leads to the removal of social protections associated with liberalism in its positive sense, adding up to the end of citizenship as we know it. Here, the citizen, formerly protected by political rights to self-determination and a welfare safety net, is perpetually potentially dispensable and at risk of redundancy or abandonment: "the neoliberal subject is granted no guarantee of life (on the contrary, in markets, some must die for others to live)." 22 In the UK, as part of the reform of welfare practices, we have witnessed such rituals of sacrifice enacted to a shocking and utterly disgraceful degree. In 2015, after receiving successive freedom of information requests, the UK government released statistics that showed that nearly ninety people were dying per month after a controversial assessment procedure found them "fit for work," leading to a reduction or removal of their disability benefits. 23

Liberal democracy is a project that expresses ideals in excess of itself according to Wendy Brown, ²⁴ ideals that she equates with the histories of political liberalism but which, for me, are positioned at a fault-line rather than point of critical potential associated with liberalism. This fault-line is produced by the intense forms of presence generated by the performances inside the pauper concert. Arguably, this fault-line signals the domain of a "common" self as well as a common system of value, beyond the ideal of the autonomous and economically productive, self-acting, disciplined individual who contributes to the prosperity of a liberal economy. Evoking the discussion of Aristotle's household economy above, (neo)liberal welfare regimes fail to capture the ways in which those deemed unfit for work, marked as bodies that do not work or do not work hard enough, or bodies whose work is not appreciated and does not "appreciate," might provide the underpinnings of both liberal *and* alternative systems of value. For example, as Brown herself points out, in neoliberal economies these elided bodies are often feminine, providing invisible and unwaged forms of social care that comprise the "invisible infrastructure sustaining a world of putatively self-investing human capitals."

We move in the final section of this reflection to a consideration of the pauper performers, moments of performance that represent our attempt to include the voices of the poor in the research, voices that are often absent from the historical record or only present in disembodied form, as marks in lists and ledgers.

8. The Pauper Chorus



Figure 8. The Pauper Chorus. Photograph courtesy of Joel Chester Fildes.

Carran: The emotional fulcrum of *The House*, the Pauper Chorus, is made up of a series of voices, personas, gestures, and postures that I encountered when physically exploring the word "poor." The Pauper Chorus leads to a crescendo where these voices come together to recite the hymn "Jesu lover of my soul," overlaid with the thematic phrase "public money." These are the voices in the workhouse walls—the forgotten ones, the ghost chorus, sensed in the etched markings left by inmates—neither performer nor audience know who they are and we never see or hear them as distinct characters. There are three shadow paupers in the chorus, defined by age: the child pauper, the adolescent pauper, and the aged pauper. Here, the license created by a physicalized mode of performing allows me to generate "many out of just one." As a performer, I see this moment of performance as a state of evocation, or "speaking in tongues" to use a Christian reference point, creating the sound of the mass. Towards the end, Matron slides in again, conducting the choir, bringing it to order, so that it ends beautifully tuned and ringing in the air. When performing the Pauper Chorus, I turn on a spiral, shifting through different images of the poor—baby, child, beggar, pointing the finger—accusing, feeling shame, hitting out, internalizing blame. Physically, I am working with a principle of opposition to deal with contradictions in ideas. A fracture occurs, the tension is stretched in both directions, and

various emotional and physical states are configured. This part of the performance can be uncomfortable and anxiety-provoking to witness. I am not following a script here, instead I am in a state of evocation of experiences and encounters, and words and fragments that left their presence during the process of research.

Through the recollections of two former members of staff of Dearnley Workhouse in Rochdale, we encountered three women. They were called Beattie, Phyllis, and Alice-we do not know their surnames, and we never met them in real life. They were Rochdale women who spent their whole lives in institutional care and lived parallel lives to my Nana-in-hospital. From reading further, we discovered that this entrapment in regimes of care over decades of life is a story common to many women in this period. Working as a solo performer, I was looking for a cast to be in the play, and these women became part of the performance. They are not represented as "characters" but they are present and, like the workhouse buildings, became collaborators in the process of making. They are like amoeba, raw material, never distinct, and as I walk down the workhouse corridors in each performance they accompany me. The little I was able to find out about their stories begins to unfold in the pre-performance soundtrack, where the audience hear something about their lives in hospital through the recollections of those responsible for their care. More of these descriptions reappear in the final soundtrack, and here they merge into my nana's story as the piece concludes. Throughout the performance, the human presences described in these recollections inhabit me, and I hope the performance gives voice and body to those forgotten people.

9. Pauper Three (Job-Seeker)



[Carran?:] The confrontation between Data Protector/Accountant and Pauper Three (Job-Seeker), the penultimate image in this essay, represents a shift from workhouse setting to contemporary employment center. Whilst Pauper Three (Job-Seeker) has her historical roots in the Pauper Chorus, especially the adolescent pauper shadow, she is also a child of the 1970s. When it comes to her turn to demonstrate the three-step program, what Pauper Three (Job-Seeker) thinks she should be doing is dancing riotously to a Neil Young track—a track originally released in 1970, when I was fourteen years old, "Only Love Can Break Your Heart." Unimpressed, the Data Protector/Accountant makes her go back to "level one" and show that she has successfully completed her first step. Pauper Three (Job-Seeker) tries to argue that she can do her dance and her demonstration, but her appeal fails. She wants to be in the concert but she does not quite understand the audition procedure. She is beside herself—she tries to control her movements through her level one demonstration, but is too full of energy. The cling-filmed overturned desk in the photograph, shortly to become a Perspex barrier in a 1970s-style employment center, is a machine that she tries to control in order to demonstrate her level one competence weaving the cling-film threads around its legs (an evocation of picking oakum, a form of labor in the workhouse, reinvented here as "shit job"). But she cannot contain herself and the machine spirals out of control. At each attempt her offers to the Data Protector/Accountant are turned down because she does not wholly conform to the rules of the game, and at the end of the sequence she finds herself sanctioned and without money or food. This is a picture of totally frustrated creativity and intelligence, with the only avenue of resistance being self-destruction.

Jenny: The system of accounting for the poor employed in the performance research is very different to the system of accounting represented by the Data Protector/Accountant. At one point in the process, Carran said that the Data Protector/Accountant makes the poor accountable and legible by directing them to "come up here, let's have a look at you, don't cross the barrier, don't come too close, stand there, wait there, now you can come in, it will be good for you." This form of processing avoids contamination by the other whereas, and in her own words, Carran "allows the contamination." If for Cruikshank "in the strategic field of welfare everyone is accountable but there are no bodies," Carran's performance amounted to placing the body, and most importantly, a sense of interrelation and interdependence between bodies, into a "bodyless" system of accounting.

The ways in which the lives of the poor are accounted for in the historical record make a pure form of documentary performance inappropriate, just as the photograph could not provide a secure account of the experience of the girls in the children's home. Instead, The House drew on spectral presences in memories and archives, and left over from actual encounters. As such, the performance is akin to modes of exemplification, vivification, and intense kinds of visibilization that for Miranda Joseph, extending Poovey's discussion of the abstract representational practices that created the nineteenth century social body, might provide a foundation for a critical practice of accounting. Whilst Poovey reads abstraction as tending towards totalization, Joseph draws attention to a dialectic between particularity and abstraction that directs attention toward "the lived immanence of what is absent, invisible, abstract, and potent" in every form of measure and value. 27 By staging a pauper concert to account for the life of its pauper performers, and by deliberately identifying and exaggerating fractures in those performances, *The House* attends to the credit-worthiness of all its subjects, young and old, frail and robust, excessive and unproductive. Performance does not leverage justice here, perhaps, but it ensures that systems of accounting for and assigning value to life do not settle into

narrow identifications on the one hand, or totalizing, flattening and exclusive generalizations on the other.

In part, the issue here relates to the need to map performance's relationships to power in subtle ways, especially in the domains of social welfare where, as Cruikshank insists, the coercive and voluntary technologies of citizenship mean that "acquiescence and rebellion are not antithetical but can take place in the same breath." 28 The House returns the body to the fold and—in the eruptions of suppressed energy that bring about collapses and breaks—it materializes refusal. But this refusal is terrifying, as we learn from Pauper Three/Job-Seeker. As much as she is frustrated, she desperately wants to prove herself worthy of being included in the concert, of being part of the social domain and guaranteed a life that matters. The dream of the house at this point in the concert is one of cruelty, with the body remaining on a perpetual threshold between inclusion and exclusion. Pauper Three (Job-Seeker) is determined to perform her worth inside the program but always exceeds its constraints and so is told to go away, work more, invest more, try again, try harder. Pauper Three (Job-Seeker) is productive and creative, but cannot fit to the narrow regimes of productivity on offer—she is left outside, furious, face pressed into the cling-film, exhausted by the effort of self-control, spitting and suffocating as she makes her demand for a benefit payment through the impenetrable barrier.

The willful figure, as Sara Ahmed suggests, is often female and her errant energy appears in literature as deviant, wayward, and misbehaving body parts. 29 The willful body parts in this scene—the stamps of Pauper Three (Job-Seeker)'s dancing for example, the wild swinging of her hair, her raucous shouting of her song, repeatedly evokes the fault-line between the voluntary and coercive in technologies of welfare that capture the poor female citizen. Here, the body who does not work for a living—spitting, breathing, sweating, and stamping—dances a line between accommodating the demand to perform work and self-destruction. The riotous moves of Pauper Three (Job-Seeker), failing to successfully demonstrate her level one because she wants to dance, show that the project of work on the self always fails, because there is always more work to do. It is, paradoxically, perhaps at this point of despair that the house of theatre provides its most potent dream of shelter. Bachelard notes that dreams of being inside in the face of the outside, or outside looking in, have "the sharpness of yes and no." But he also suggests that there is circularity here, as "outside" can only be understood in relation to "inside" and that a "threshold god" creates porousness in every door. 31 Such a threshold god exists here in the form of the audience, who feel for and with Pauper Three (Job-Seeker). In the same moment that the three-step improvement program attempts to discipline her errant energy, Pauper Three (Job-Seeker)'s energetic returns, through creating moments of visceral and affective opening to the audience, highlight the limits of closure.

10. A Fairytale Conclusion



Figure 10. The Fairy Grandmother. Photograph courtesy of Joel Chester Fildes.

The pauper concert ends with a performance by the aged pauper, drawing on Carran's research into the life of her Nana-in-hospital and inspired by the photograph of her singing described above. Here, the aged pauper stands on a chair and sings a popular music hall song about a fairy that nobody loves because she is too old and has lost her glitter. She tries to fly into the sky, but this fairytale conclusion does not offer any final liberation. The fairy refuses to sing any more verses, falls from the chair, and returns to the institution. But at this point *The House* moves into a series of readings of lovingly archived fragments from records of Nana-in-hospital's life, building a moving picture of a life lived in care. This closure situates the one who "failed" to act in her own interests, who did not make an economic contribution, who could not complete "the steps," in a regime of appreciation, care, and value that is populated by a desire to find points of common connection and association, and that admits all shapes and forms of life.

In reflecting on this research, we acknowledge performance's implication in exclusive constructions of economic citizenship but also search for an activist theatre practice—one that might contribute to understanding the value of performance for leveraging justice. What did we learn? From the perspective of social practice—including social theatre practice—our discoveries point to the need to think carefully about the regimes of appearance in which we participate as artists—what forms of accounting are we acting out? There is a need to work inside our "projects" and "programs" in ways that open up possibilities for common relation and that also mobilize alternative forms of identifying

and distributing value and resource. As part of this, there is an imperative to nurture a social theatre practice without a plan, without a project, as well as to create programs and projects that provide the protective cover needed whilst we build houses for multitudes (to refer again to Carlson). We need time and space for privileging stories of false starts, failure, and collapse over narratives of recovery, only drawing on narratives of redemption and survival to develop a different kind of practice, a practice that might take years rather than weeks to materialize. Here, instead of chasing bodily and social forms that "work" in the short-term we might gather together willful parts and allow for creative contaminations via ghostly encounters across time and place. To return to Sara Ahmed, such gatherings might create conditions for new kinds of relationship: "Wandering parts can wander toward other parts, creating fantastic new combinations, affinities of matter that matter. Queer parts are parts of many, parts that in wandering away create something new." 33

The House does not work without its audience. It does not work for itself. In that sense it is just like any other piece of theatre—it needs an audience, but an audience of a particular kind. The piece has been carefully framed within a research context and outside of that context it may be misconstrued, dismissed, and even misrepresented. It is not a commercial piece. Perhaps it should be performed for free, supporting protest campaigns, fundraising on behalf of the "small fish" in the "Big Society" or performed in heritage sites, whispering amongst the walls of disused Victorian buildings. Or maybe it should be performed at lunchtime in the House of Commons in the UK Parliament. We do not know but we are pleased that the performance has a life beyond itself. As part of this, we are pleased that the performance and its errant bodies have to some extent escaped imprisonment in an archive at the mercy of the next data protector. The House is a representation of a life's journey and it is the first declaration of a set of unknown stories, not yet researched, which have much more to tell.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994 {1964}), 46-7.
- 2. Outputs from the "Poor Theatres" research project include a series of academic publications as well as an online resource containing documentation of social theatre projects engaging with issues of poverty and economic inequality nationally and internationally. This resource can be found on a research website, where readers can also view Carran's "Working Diary" on the practice-based research:

 http://www.manchester.ac.uk/poortheatres (accessed March 25, 2016). A detailed account of the performance practice as research methodology, together with a script and audience responses to the performance, can be accessed via: Jenny Hughes and Carran Waterfield, "The House: A Curated Portfolio in Five Parts. A Practice-Based Research Project Exploring Theatre, Performance, and Poverty," Studies in Theatre and Performance 37, no. 1 (2017, forthcoming). 2
- 3. Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1969).
- 4. Marvin Carlson "House," Contemporary Theatre Review, 23, no.1 (2013), 31.
- 5. Bachelard, *Poetics*, 3. 2
- 6. Job. 30 (New American Standard Version).

- 7. As will become clear, our thinking about citizenship has been influenced by Wendy Brown's account of the challenges posed to liberal discourses and practices of citizenship by neoliberal economic regimes (see discussion below).
- 8. *Rochdale Observer*, December 22, 1877. Available via the microfiche archive held at the Local Studies Centre in Rochdale (Lancashire, UK).
- 9. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 (1944)), 86-7.
- 10. Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830–1864* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 112.

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- 11. For an account of theatrical entertainment in Dearnley Workhouse, see Jenny Hughes, "A Pre-History of Applied Theatre: Work, House, Perform," in *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, eds. Jenny Hughes and Helen Nicholson (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 40–60.
- 12. Poovey, Making a Social Body, 8. 🖸
- 13. Ibid., 35. 🔁
- 14. Ibid., 9. 🔁
- 15. Ibid., 16. 🔁
- 16. Lisa Forman-Cody, "The Politics of Illegitimacy in an Age of Reform: Women, Reproduction, and Political Economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834," *Journal of Women's History* 11, no. 4 (2000), 150.
- 17. T.A. Sinclair, trans., *Aristotle: The Politics* (London: Penguin Books, 1951). See in particular: Books IV–VI.
- 18. Roy Hudd is a stand-up comedian, radio host, and television actor, well known in the UK.
- 19. Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 38-9.
- 20. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 10.
- 21. Ibid., 33-4. She draws here on Michel Feher, "Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital," *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2009).
- 22. Ibid., 111. 🔁
- 23. Patrick Butler, "Thousands Have Died after Being Found Fit for Work," *The Guardian*, August 11, 2015, accessed March 15, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/aug/27/thousands-died-after-fit-for-work-assessment-dwp-figures.
- 24. Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 206.
- 25. Ibid., 106-07. 2
- 26. Cruikshank, The Will to Empower, 117.
- 27. Miranda Joseph, *Debt to Society: Accounting for Life under Capitalism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 15. For Joseph's discussion of Poovey's abstraction, see xviii-xix.
- 28. Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 41.
- 29. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014).
- 30. Bachelard, *Poetics*, 211.
- 31. Ibid., 223.
- 32. "Nobody Loves a Fairy When She's Forty" by Arthur Le Clerg (1934).



Jenny Hughes

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Carran Waterfield

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Sofie de Smet and Marieke Breyne, ""A Day for Us to Mourn": Unsettling Performances of Marikana," *Lateral 5.2* (2016).

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

"A Day for Us to Mourn": Unsettling Performances of Marikana

Sofie de Smet and Marieke Breyne

ABSTRACT Introduction On the 16th of August 2012 thirty-four Lonmin miners lost their lives at Marikana in South Africa. They were killed by the police who—after failed, ignored, or impeded negotiations with the striking miners—were assigned by the Lonmin Board of Directors and the mining unions to demobilize and dismantle the striking mass present at the [...]

Introduction

On the 16th of August 2012 thirty-four Lonmin miners lost their lives at Marikana in South Africa. They were killed by the police who—after failed, ignored, or impeded negotiations with the striking miners—were assigned by the Lonmin Board of Directors and the mining unions to demobilize and dismantle the striking mass present at the Marikana area. The Marikana event, as a traumatic culmination of distorted socioeconomic power, demonstrated that South Africa's road to resolving conflict, structural inequality, and injustice still remains to be traveled. It demonstrated that organized violence, as it was previously conducted under apartheid, is still operative in the new South Africa's globalized state within the context of rising transnational neoliberalism in Africa. This state of affairs has, in turn, led numerous theatre makers to take up this shocking event, which is now known as the "Marikana massacre." The site-specific performances *Mari and Kana* (2015) and *Iqhiya Emnyama* (2015), presented in the heart of Cape Town, question and re-examine existing power systems and the problematic structural injustice at the heart of the massacre.

Every South African autumn, Cape Town's buzzing city center is transformed into an art scene through the annual public arts festival, *Infecting the City*. This festival, which welcomed more than fifty productions and 290 artists during its latest edition in March 2015, is praised for its efforts to democratize art via a well-considered, multifaceted program and wide-reaching audience scope. From its earliest edition in 2008, at that time directed by Jay Pather and Brett Bailey, the festival invited an equal number of artists from the inner city of Cape Town and artists from the surrounding townships to participate. As all productions are free, (semi-)public, and take place in the heart of Cape Town, the festival attracts a very heterogeneous audience varying from artists to students to tourists to beggars. Only 19% of the festival's artists are international guests. In this respect, a significant number of performances at the festival are anchored in contemporary South Africa which is easily inflammable and marked by corruption. Such an embeddedness generates critical debates among myriad, multi-cultural voices each year.

The performances *Mari and Kana* and *Iqhiya Emnyama*, presented at *Infecting the City* 2015, take the Marikana killings as a starting point. *Mari and Kana* is a production of

South African theatre maker Mandisi Sindo and his company Theatre4Change Therapeutic Theatre (T3) in close collaboration with the company Lingua Franca Spoken Word Movement, based in the township Khayelitsha. On the playbill of Infecting the City 2015, Mari and Kana is announced as a journey of two young men who provisionally leave prison to attend a Xhosa ceremony around the graves of their fathers. In line with Sindo's theatre oeuvre, Mari and Kana combines elements of traditional Xhosa ritual, contemporary dance, opera, poetry, live percussion, and visual imagery. I Iqhiya Emnyama, a performance that also premiered at Infecting the City 2015, was created by Cindy Mkaza-Siboto. Mkaza-Siboto is a director specialized in physical theatre, storytelling, and object theatre. As a performative exploration of grief, Iqhiya Emnyama (Xhosa for black cloth or doekie in Afrikaans) draws attention to the relation between the mourning widow and the black cloth. Both performances took place on the same evening and in the same public area of Cape Town, namely the Company Garden. Known for its neat gardens with impressively curled trees, the Garden is a touristic hot spot that never lost its authentic urban character due to the rushing business people, strolling couples, curious squirrels, and soldiers-on-exercise who cross its paths.

This essay offers a reflection on the particular transformative power of Mari and Kana and Ighiya Emnyama. Both performances provide an opportunity for a participatory and reflective encounter between the audience members, the site, and the performers. The performances call for justice in afro-neoliberal South Africa through their emphasis on the ones who were left behind after the media disappeared, the commission's report was published, and the strikers went back to work: the widows of the thirty-four killed Lonmin miners. Focusing on the individual bodily daily practice of the women, the performances dismantle the dominant, mediatized discourse of commemoration of the Marikana killings. They elicit a reflection on the value of representing the daily life-struggle of the mourning women against inhumanity and socioeconomic inequality in a neoliberal South Africa. Through the public act of mourning, the performances subvert the hierarchy of grievability and, hence, pose a challenge to political authority. Unsettling the ubiquity of resilient subjects on which neoliberal subjectivity is built, the omnipresence of vulnerability in the two performances nurtures a process of rethinking structural justice. Furthermore, the performances enact alternative identities in public space through the subversion of the constructed category of "the mourning South Africa woman." We conclude that both performances entail unique driving forces that question existing power systems and the problematic structural injustice at the heart of the massacre. They function as interventions into "leveraging justice" for the miners, and especially their widows.

In what follows, we first describe the performances as we experienced them, and then analyze their context, including the strategic memory produced by the government and the hegemonic weight of the places of performance. We then move to the resistance of the mourning women in performance, resistance to both the role of widows in South African culture and also to the concept of resilience that becomes, under neoliberalism, a fetishized coping mechanism exonerating the state of responsibility for the women's well-being and recovery.

Mourning in the Company Garden

On the evening of the festival's performances of *Mari and Kana* and *Iqhiya Emnyama*, one of the first things the audience notices is the transformation of the Company Garden into a graveyard with small white crosses. Via their inherent religious character, these crosses mark the scene of acts of the public performance *Mari and Kana*. The expanding audience, searching for a seat around an absent stage, remains at a respectful distance from the graves. Referring to the widespread image of the graveyard at Wonderkop Koppie (the

rocky hill where the strikers gathered), these white crosses install a distinctive atmosphere. Words such as "mineworkers" and "Marikana" are whispered throughout the gathered crowd and some people explicitly request silence. This graveyard-scene seems to produce an instantly respectful attitude and stimulates emotional dynamics.

As soon as the audience has gathered around the graveyard, two musicians in working clothes start to play a repetitive tune. One does not realize the impact of the hypnotizing sound until a drum briefly slips out of the musician's hand and the beat is interrupted. This haunting soundscape will last throughout the performance, strengthened by the voices of two female choir members carrying white umbrellas. Suddenly, however, a car drives up and two policemen roughly drag two young prisoners on stage and remove their handcuffs. Although the presence of the policemen and the men in orange prison suits is impressive, our attention is continuously drawn to two women near to the audience. Sitting with stretched legs on the gravel and turning their eyes on the ground, these women slowly perform a dance of simple mourning gestures. They light a small fire at the foot of a cross and then walk around and pray next to the cross. The prayer gestures enlarge and become expressive movements of despair. Combined with a heart-breaking lament and a mirrored dance by the two young prisoners in the background, the performance becomes a choreography of pain and grief.

The roles of mothers and sons are clarified through the interactions between the women and the men. The two sons called Mari and Kana hold their mothers during their lament while the mothers hold their sons in an attempt to bathe them. In contrast to the women, the two young men also challenge each other physically through a play-fight in bare torso. Only once do they arrange themselves all in one line, alternating grief gestures with a military step on the spot.

Every movement is enriched by the continuous singing of the choir. The lament is interrupted by poetry fragments and exclamations of the real names of the dead Marikana mineworkers. When the song *Vuka Mntomnyana* (translated as "Wake up Blackman") softens and the dark night falls over the Garden, the audience realizes the performance is over, though the presence of the remaining white crosses and the indelible sounds hold the performance's affect long after the applause.

Subsequently, a festival guide invites the spectators to move on to the next performance in the Company Garden. Following a video work and a performance of two comedians, three women, almost unnoticeable, appear in the audience. They stand out due to their long black clothes, similar to the clothes worn by the women in Mari and Kana. These women drag along a big mattress and slowly make their way through the crowd. The crowd, still filled with shaking laughter from the previous comic cabaret-show, swarms extensively and noisy around the silent women. The women, however, keep their slow pace and serene expressions, walking perfectly in line down to the Government Avenue. When the women meet a fourth woman with a mattress and a seated fifth performer, who plays traditional Xhosa instruments, all spectators understand that they reached the site of the last performance of that evening, entitled Iqhiya Emnyama. The audience finds a standing or seating position. The four women place themselves in the middle of the crowd and lay down their mattresses. What follows is the presentation of visually associated fragments of mourning customs. The women cover themselves in black cloths and sit in freeze-poses on the piled mattresses. They circle around the mattresses and use them as walls of an improvised house. Daily customs such as making a lunchbox and drinking tea are combined with abstract gestures of pain, despair, and disgust. The women sing, cry, and loudly shout out their pain. Finally, they rip off their black cloths and take off their shoes followed by a re-enactment of a protest march on the mattresses. At the end, the repeated words "A piece of me died that night" announce a burial ritual, in which the

performers invite the audience to participate. A prayer song is initiated, immediately responded to by the audience singing along. With this song, the full-evening program in the Company Garden ends. In sum, the spectator at *Mari and Kana* and *Iqhiya Emnyama* co-creates with the performers rituals of mourning and grief. These rituals moreover take place in a politically-burdened urban landscape. In what follows, we argue that these performances tackle racial, spatial, and gender-based patterns of inequality at the backdrop of neoliberalism in post-apartheid South Africa. Before we analyze the performances' aesthetics in regard to their ethical imperatives, the affinity of the actual South African government with the neoliberal body of thought needs to be unpacked.

Critics have argued that the transition towards a neoliberal post-apartheid state favored a small, new, ruling black elite, and the old beneficiaries of the apartheid regime, as after 1994 "they were cementing their alliance with the corporate raiders in the advanced capitalist world." At the heart of governmental economic policy, profound contradictions are found. On the one hand the African National Congress' (ANC) revolutionary principles and responsibility towards the poor and the working class are reflected in their pro-poor rhetoric and social programs. On the other hand, the ANC government permitted massive capital flight that increased significantly since the end of apartheid, maintained high interest rates, and cut the budget deficit. A loss of capital leads to a loss of investments, which in its turn influences the unemployment and inequality rates and "the ongoing failure to confront the legacy of the apartheid past." 4

After the defeat of apartheid, the South African government integrated the country into the global economy primarily as a mining exporter heavily reliant on foreign capital inflows. Pro-capitalist economic policies further subjected the South African mining industry to the rule of transnational capital and free markets. As part of a global economy, South Africa has to meet the need for flexibility in work conditions. Since the democratic transition, employment has for example largely shifted from direct employment towards third parties, and from livelong employment towards temporary. ⁵ In order to maximize profit and minimize risks, mining work has become increasingly fragmented, paving the way for precarious work conditions. Furthermore, by stimulating contract employment and third party employment, union organizations, and labor movements that fight against exploitation are being weakened. The precariousness of the miners' working conditions is mirrored by the poor living conditions in the informal settings where a myriad of the miners live. These informal settings are characterized by a lack of basic facilities such as running water and electricity, and a lack of safety. The multinational Lonmin Company, the third largest producers of platinum in the world, acknowledged that a great number of the surrounding inhabitants of its mines live in informal settings. Specifically in Rustenburg, a municipality area located one-hundred kilometers from Johannesburg, the so called "hub of the world platinum mining production," formal housing of the mining communities has even decreased from 47% to 42% between 2001 and 2007, indicating the precarious conditions of the workforce.

Strategic Mourning

After August 2012 the above-mentioned words "Lonmin" and "Rustenburg" are hardly spoken without referring to the miners' strike at Marikana. The strike resulted in the largest state massacre of South African citizens since the Soweto Uprising in 1976. The police gunfire was without a doubt the immediate cause of the Marikana massacre. Nonetheless, critics have fundamentally questioned the objectivity of NUM (the National Union of Mineworkers) and its collaboration with Lonmin's management, as well as the responsibility of the government in this tragic event. According to Vishwas Satgar, "The Marikana massacre affirms this reality and the willingness of ruling elites to go beyond

market mechanisms to the point that state violence is utilized to maintain and manage a deeply globalized economy." $\frac{9}{2}$

A locus of thoughtful critique in this essay is the so-called "strategic memory" induced by the government and media. It is arguable that the role of "a particular purpose as part of a strategic political project," 10 is profoundly apparent in the government's reaction to the massacre. The following words come from President Zuma's statement on the Marikana Lonmin mine workers' tragedy on August 17, 2012: "However, today is not an occasion for blame, finger-pointing or recrimination. [...] as I said, this is not a day to apportion blame. It is a day for us to mourn together as a nation." 11 The government's first reaction to the Marikana massacre involved two practices that are here considered as components of such a strategic memory: the enforcement of one week of silent mourning, and the formation of the Marikana Commission of Inquiry. By doing so, the government seemed to instantly create a vacuum of alternatives and responsibilities in order to construct a suitable "narrative" 12 for this tragic event. In the wake of Marikana the South African government strongly repudiated any comparison with analogous massacres from the apartheid era. Still, haunting images from the past spread like wildfire; images of "singing protesters dancing in the faces of uniformed, well-armed police, followed by shots and slowly settling dust." 13 More importantly, the government seemed to neglect not only the comparisons to tragic events such as the Soweto Uprising and Sharpeville massacre, ubiquitous on social media, but also to the continuous historical economic struggles that resulted in massive laborers' strikes in the twentieth century. The official narrative has a tendency to reduce the massacre to a tragedy that simply should be mourned on all sides. This discourse is mirrored by a literal denial when government spokespersons consequently describe Marikana as a "tragedy" and refuse to describe Marikana as a "massacre." 14

This rhetoric seems to restrict the event to an act of nature comparable to a tornado or a hurricane without a responsible actor. Violence was unquestionably present on both sides, but only the unruly strikers were portrayed and commemorated as violent actors. As Alexander et al., observe: "The consciousness of South Africans and others has been scarred by media footage that makes it seem like strikers were charging the police," who were by all means merely "defending themselves against savages." 15 This discourse was followed by the heavy presence of military and police at Marikana while the government openly assured international investors that mining investments in South Africa are very secure. In the aftermath of Marikana 270 mine workers were initially charged with murder. In 2015, three years after the massacre, president Zuma responded to a student's question about the use of violence as follows: "Those people in Marikana had killed people and the police were stopping them from killing people." 16 Even years later and after the official report of the commission was published, the initial strategic image of the violent mine worker becomes continuously reinforced by a sole focus on the clash between the police and the violent mine workers. This strategic memory does not touch upon the continuous struggle that the remaining mine workers and the families of the dead miners undergo.

In contemporary South African political life, with its neoliberal agenda, this strategic narrative and its specific mechanisms of power reveal the attempts for a "differential distribution of grievability" ¹⁷ in public life. Judith Butler shines a light on grievability as a fundamental presupposition for a life or subject that matters: "Those who remain faceless or whose faces are presented to us as so many symbols of evil, authorize us to become senseless before those lives we have eradicated, and whose grievability is indefinitely postponed." ¹⁸ The dominant public representation of Marikana and their miners

reproduces and regulates the events in such a way that the population tends to remain ungrievable.

Sharing Mourning through Performance

Mari and Kana and Ighiya Emnyama challenge the dominant strategic memory practices. Both performances unsettle and interrogate politically-induced conditions of grievability by creating a public mourning ritual that encourages audience members to bodily engage and participate in grieving. Mari and Kana is an immersive creation. Encountering the naturalistic set-up of the crosses and the haunting soundscape, the audience is from the very start absorbed into the emotional journey of the performers even before their appearance. In the beginning the dramatis personae of the dead mine workers, the fathers of the prisoners, are the only ones present. These two static figures with white-painted faces form an immobile part of the performance's backdrop throughout the performance. Their particular presence generates a peculiar tension as these figures operate as both the spirits of the people mourned during the staged ritual and as vibrant characters on scene. This tension, climaxing in the calling out of the real names of the lost mine workers, seems to facilitate the audiences' engagement with the intended grief ritual as the tension shields the ritual from an ultimate cathartic closure or completeness. Indeed, James Thompson notes that "rather than taming the past in a strategic project, performance can maintain its difficultness, its incompleteness, in the present." 19

Various all-sensory ritual mourning acts are performed, such as, for example, blowing ash over the crosses. The intended ritual is, however, primarily created by the incredible energetic bodies of the performers. Their close-up and at times explosive bodily expressions of grief, enveloped by the non-stop singing, continuously contribute to the creation of a shared emotional state of despair. Audience and performers literally share their crying. This state of affairs at the same time enables and defines the ritual. In contrast to the government, which strategically plays upon grief as a tool of closure, these performances display an ongoing harmful grief that seems to unite, even beyond every particular tragic event, the gathered mourners.

Similarly, in *Iqhiya Emnyama* the ritual is shaped and legitimized by an intended and literal sharing of grief. As Mkaza-Siboto elucidates in an interview: "I wanted to orchestrate a ritual for the public to be able to participate in the mourning, because not all of us could afford to go the place of the massacre or the funeral." Through the highly mediatized circulation of an image of a man in a green blanket, the mine workers of Marikana have come to be strongly associated with this item. The theatrical object (green blanket) in *Iqhiya Emnyama* personifies the mine workers and becomes a supportive and highly symbolic element in the performance, which marks the performer as a mine worker, but then transforms into the object of murder itself—as the blanket is cut into pieces. The blanket remains visible throughout the performance and in this regard, the audience and the performers continue to share the focal point of their grieving.

Furthermore, the slow and repetitive sound, mostly produced by a single traditional Xhosa instrument, generates an effect of shared trance in one enclosed auditory cosmos. In contrast, the urgent rhythms and the energetic bawling of the women are accompanied by a dramatic howling wind. This fortuitous wind not only dramatizes the grief, it also seems to authenticate it and deepen the uniqueness of the moment of sharing. The wind underlines the temporal character of the performance, the consciousness of the ephemeral and unique shared presence of the performers, spectators, and surroundings.

At the end of the performance, this sharing is consolidated when some audience members are asked to engage in a burial ritual and throw earth on the grave portrayed by the torn green blanket. As the first tones of a prayer meeting song are launched, a number of

spectators start to sing alone, roar out "amen," clap and dance. Some of them close their eyes and others fold their hands or embrace the persons nearby. Through these actions, the performance calls for corporeal co-presence, a responsiveness and performativity on behalf of the spectator, and consequently a sharing of the mourning ritual. Moreover, throughout the performance of *Iqhiya Emnyama* the spectator is standing, sitting, and walking together with the performers in the Company Garden. In this respect, the full participation of the spectator's body "allows for a heightened receptiveness to corporeal responses," 21 and provides the spectator with a "subliminal element of performativity." 22

In the spirit of Antigone's public mourning for her brother, the widows of the Marikana miners chose openly to grieve the death of their husbands, highlighting the fraught nature of hierarchy in grievability. Reacting to the highly controlled regimes of power, the widows' open grieving designates expressions of outrage, and as Butler writes, "outrage in the face of injustice or indeed of unbearable loss has enormous political potential." Butler allocates political potential to the disruptive character of the act of public mourning itself as it troubles the order and hierarchy of political authority. Both performances as performative public mourning rituals in the Company Garden shape such interventions into the actual debate on the Marikana massacre. The disruptive character is complicated further as the real names of the deceased Marikana workers are called in the performative landscape that blurs the boundaries between reality and fiction.

The audience's awareness of the site is continuously increased in both performances as the spectator is invited to participate, to make choices, to react, and to respond. The embodied encounter with the site in which the spectator is activated as a "co-creator of meaning," 24 promotes awareness of and "response-ability" 25 to the political significance beyond the performance. Through the temporary transformation of the Company Garden into a place of performance, the spectator becomes part of a transcendental world. Victoria Hunter argues that through such a process of transcendence, the spectator's "present-ness" is even more developed "in a world in which the rules of engagement and behaviour are momentarily disrupted enabling a freeing-up of behaviors, actions, and possible interventions." 26

In Dialogue in a Co-Transformed Public Space

More than anything, the self-revelatory experience of the spectator/participant in Mari and Kana and Iqhiya Emnyama, which challenges the individual to reflect physically and conceptually, takes place in a politically-charged urban landscape. In Mari and Kana, the audience encounters the widows and the spirits of miners precisely in front of the South African Museum. Although the museum is never directly highlighted by performative interactions or technical effects, its presence is primary. As the spectators watch the mourning women and hear the echoing of the real mineworkers' names, the museum remains immovably present. The museum itself is strongly associated with its exhibition of the Bushmen, the indigenous inhabitants of southern Africa, that reduced them to "physical types," of a "primitive race." In this respect, the site of the South African Museum carries its history with it as an "animating absence in the present," 28 and continues to embody the realm of social injustice during apartheid and beyond. Essentially, the spectator as political witness feels "exactly what it is to be in this place at this time." 29 The audience members are obliged to navigate in this political landscape, in which the museum assumes responsibility as a third actor and a "governmental advocate."30

At the start of *Iqhiya Emnyama* the audience members are positioned as active pedestrians on the Government Avenue. Once the audience has eventually arrived at the venue of the performance, each individual finds themselves between the performing

women and the South African Parliament. "We are literally bringing our baggage in front of the parliament, and they have to deal with it," explains director Mkaza-Siboto. The audience's attention is irrevocably directed towards the government and its ambiguous position in the Marikana massacre—a position that is neither clarified nor purified by the delayed publication of the investigative report of the Inquiry Commission of Marikana. The spectators function in the site-world as the physical joints between the performance and the parliament. Consequently, they are called upon to act and respond while assuming responsibility as South African citizens and, moreover, agents of social justice. In sum, both performances deliberately stimulate the audience members to reflect on what they see, hear, and do in relationship to their experiences in the (political) world.

In what follows, we would like to highlight that these spaces in both performances are above all created through the presence of performing women, the ones who are left behind at Marikana trying to survive and continue their lives under disastrous economic conditions. In this regard, the performances tackle the particularly problematic, gendered dimensions of the Marikana massacre and entail remarkable messages in gendered-subtext within a general neoliberal discourse. The performance sites could be considered as "invented spaces," defined by Faranak Miraftab as "the spaces occupied by the grassroots that confront the authorities and the status quo, in the hope for a larger societal change." Miraftab considers these spaces as a necessary refinement of the feminist project of citizenship.

Afterwards: Post-Marikana Resistance to Resilience

In the words of a Marikana widow:

Actually, who ordered the police to kill our husbands, was it Lonmin? Or, was it the government that signed that the police must kill our husbands? Today I am called a widow and my children are called fatherless because of the police. I blame the mine, the police and the government because they are the ones who control this country. [...] Our future is no more and I feel very hopeless because I do not know who will educate my children. My husband never made us suffer. He was always providing for us. The government has promised us that they will support us for three months with groceries, but they only gave us three things: 12.5 kg of mealie meal, 12.5 kg of flour and 12.5 kg of samp. That's it. 33

This testimony displays the disastrous conditions in the households of the Marikana widows. Mari and Kana and Iqhiya Emnyama focus specifically on this daily life struggle in the aftermath. This performative struggle is however not represented by resilient subjects, but by genuinely vulnerable subjects. The ethos of resilience as part of the moral code for neoliberal subjects has been hotly debated in the last decade in the social sciences. This criticism calls into question how resilience might divert attention from state intervention and how it might be (ab)used in policy thinking by focusing on individual adaptation to adversity. At the price of denying vulnerability, the ubiquity of the strong support for resilient subjects that "act as rational agents within market-governed contexts," and are "capable of organizing their collective wellbeing" 34 barely hides a neoliberal undertone. Resilience implicitly suggests acceptance, endorsement, and the fact that "there is no alternative." 15 In the context of the Marikana massacre, we denote such a lack of alternative in the dominant tendency to reduce the massacre to a tragedy. In the president's statement on Marikana we perceive a strong collective exhortation towards "overcoming" such challenges as the South African society did in the past in order to uphold the nation's progress:

We have gone through painful moments before, and were able to overcome such challenges through coming together as a nation, regardless of race, colour, creed or political affiliations. We must use that national trait again during this difficult period. Most importantly, we will not be derailed from the progress we have made as a country since 1994. We will continue with our task of consolidating our hard-won freedom and democracy. And we will continue working tirelessly, to build a united, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa. 36

The tendency to over-emphasize resilience in an afro-neoliberal economy such as that in South Africa undermines the possibility of substantial transformation while the statistics cry out for more inherent re-thinking of social relationships in the ANC-guided neoliberal discourse. Marais has referred to this ubiquity of resilience in the South African state as the "the fetish of coping." In fact, he denotes an additional profound quandary demonstrated in the contradictory fusion of Ubuntu and neoliberalism. Ubuntu, an African philosophical concept, calls for human principles of communitarianism, mutual assistance, and obligation based on the bonding sense of a shared humanity and wholeness. The concept became an indispensable symbol of identification for the new South Africa in the light of a united rainbow nation during the reconciliation discourse and even more in the post-Mandela era. 38 As respect for human dignity, solidarity, restoration, and justice are values preached by Ubuntu, it incorporates the rudimentary conditions for community-level resilience. Through continuous privatization, the state removes itself from responsibility for social life, which becomes increasingly subordinate to market forces. This discourse is in contrast to the resilience and perseverance of the altruistic Ubuntu community that takes responsibility in order for households to survive. Marais observes that "the home- and community-based care system, for instance, fits snugly in the mould of coping dogma—not least in the central roles assigned to the sphere of the home (and to women within it)."39 According to Marais the female resilient subject in particular, active in South African society and specifically in a post-Marikana society, continues to practice the oxymoron of successful coping strategies. The South African woman restores continuously "a parlous and chronically insecure state of household 'viability',"40 that however cannot be considered a success story. International analyses have not been silent on the particularly problematic, gendered dimensions of the costs of resilience at the level of the household carried out by women within the families. Those costs of resilience in the form of domestic labor, unpaid work, and the work of social reproduction are being "rendered invisible and compounded over time." 41 The widows of Marikana increasingly meet the demands of coping with the direct and indirect consequences of the neoliberal mind-set of "flexicurity." Sarah Bracke has defined this as "post-feminist resilience." 42

However, in *Mari and Kana* and *Iqhiya Emnyama* the spectator is not confronted with the fetish of coping. On the contrary, the two South African performances entail remarkable messages in gendered-subtext by eliciting a reflection on the value of representing the daily life struggle of the mourning women against inhumanity and socioeconomic inequality in a new neoliberal South Africa. Furthermore, they explicitly expunge a denial of vulnerability. Therefore, they foreground issues such as grief and loss as "the fundamental sociality of embodied life." The mourning of the mother figures in *Mari and Kana* is expressed in choreography, physicality, and musicality. They throw their heads back and look up, turn their hands palms towards the sky, fall on their knees, bow, reach their hands towards the crosses. These everyday "sedimented acts," of mourning reflect "a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time." 44

Critics argue that through its de-politicizing effects, resilience undermines every expression of resistance and stimulation of state responsibility and, hence, undermines a re-evaluation and re-conceptualization of the given world. The transformative power of accepting vulnerability lies exactly in the generation of such a rethinking process as "vulnerability suggests moral responsibilities for those in positions of power towards those who are less powerful." 45 The focus on the intensive grief and loss expressed by the women in Mari and Kana and Ighiya Emnyama can involve such a point of departure to rethink another world and "critically evaluate and oppose the conditions under which certain human lives are more vulnerable than others."46 In this respect, by calling for resistance to resilience, Mari and Kana and Ighiya Emnyama re-politicize both the Marikana massacre itself and the precarious social arrangements of the mourning women that demand the responsibility and interrogation of politically-infused power systems and structural arrangements. In conclusion, they both provide an alternative and ambiguous approach to resilient subjects and call for resistance to resilience expressed by embodied daily practices of mourning and grief. This embodied aesthetics of vulnerability moves beyond reassuring the known and familiar but instead "pleads in favor of a logic of sensation that forces the spectator to think the yet unthought, to move beyond the solid ground of common sense and recognition."47

South African Widowhood

Globally seen, widows are often condemned to financially precarious living conditions due to discrimination in matters of inheritance, land, and property rights. 48 In addition to this economic impoverishment, widows in South Africa are particularly confronted with a cultural burden as widowhood involves more than merely the loss of a husband. It differs strongly from widowerhood in which widowers find themselves in a "transient phase," while widows occupy a "liminal status." 49 A widower is always reminded that he should and can be strong. In contrast to the widower, the widow and her "relatively frail body" 50 is primarily present to give meaning to the deceased man's body. Considered as still being married to her deceased man, the widow stays in an ambiguous state characterized by impurity and negative beliefs. A widow is said to possess negative spirits and even to embody the cause of her own man's death. Hence, this liminal status is expressed in variable and often ritualized customs in which the widow's body is turned into a focal point. A widow is supposed to eat with one hand, to wear only one shoe and to shave her head. She is prohibited from leaving the house and participating in public ceremonies.

Scholars have acknowledged the beneficial effect of these often ritualized customs as it heals grief, removes bad luck or *senyama*, and consequently facilitates the integration of the widow within the community. Yet, analyzing the treatment of the South African widows in the light of the Ubuntu principles of community, Matsobane Manala points out that these customs are as well "deliberate uncaring, disrespectful, discriminatory, impolite and unjust." According to Manala's fieldwork in South Africa, many widows feel encouraged by internal and external support systems. Despite this support, he also mentions feelings of isolation and stress due to the stigmatization of widowhood and customs imposed by society. Manala concludes that widowhood in Africa is an "extremely difficult and problematic stage in women's lives." 52

Mari and Kana and Iqhiya Emnyama choose to stage the unsettling stories of the widows of the Marikana massacre. In consequence, they explore the role of these South African mourning women countering a neoliberal discourse that possesses a deceptive force of encapsulation. Beyond providing a critical approach toward the coping fetish in the context of structural vulnerability and social inequality, the performances elicit, through a focus on the individual daily practice of the widows, a reflection on the value and

feasibility of representing the daily life struggle of these women and the culturally stipulated aspect of their lives as widows.

Both performances are packed with mourning signifiers that refer to the daily life of a woman inhabiting the Xhosa culture. The black clothes and headscarves immediately distinguish the female performers from the audience and define them as widows. In *Iqhiya Emnyama* the dragged mattresses, central objects in the performance, refer to the domestic space to which a widow is restricted during her mourning period. Further on, the repetitive flat-handed wiping of faces and the constructed silent poses of the women, recalling photographs, remind the audience of the public silence these widows are supposed to maintain.

Certainly, in *Mari and Kana* and *Iqhiya Emnyama*, the mourning women are manifestly symbolized through the customs of widowhood in Xhosa culture. But, through displaying a rupture within these customs, the performances also further the emerging criticism of these customs and question their legitimacy. Both performances present widows who share their grief publicly in the midst of what seems their mourning period. Before, we mentioned how African widows suffer from isolation due to the stigmatization of widowhood. "I must just stay at home; it means I am in prison. I am not supposed to visit any house and I cannot talk to people." 53 This isolation of the widows heightens the feeling of imprisonment especially because of the expulsion from their own community in the name of cultural beliefs. By staging the widows in public as mature actors, *Iqhiya Emnyama* and *Mari and Kana* challenge the cultural value of separation and isolation.

Moreover, *Iqhiya Emnyama* questions specifically the use of the black cloth. In current debates, the black cloth has been contested as a patriarchal construct of womanhood along with the restriction of the women to the domestic sphere. In the middle of *Iqhiya Emnyama* the widows rip off their black clothes and confidently perform the "toyi toyi," a marching dance often performed in political protests. In this context, Mkaza-Siboto refers to the ground-breaking act of Graça Machel who spoke in public during her mourning period: "Machel was convinced that people needed her voice. So she spoke up. This is exactly what happens in *Iqhiya Emnyama*. These women navigate in the situation in which they are present." 55

The mattresses are easily interpreted by the spectator as a readable denotation of the mourning's domestic field. The performance starts with static sitting poses of the performers on the mattresses. Despite this obvious feature of the mattresses, the spectator's construction of the meaning of this object and its suggested cultural custom is destabilized as the spectator witnesses the emotionless facial expressions and robotized shifts of the performers' poses on the mattresses. The mattresses continue to represent performative objects that playfully shift meaning throughout the performance: The mattresses function as the walls of a house, as personifications of the lovers the widows dance with and make love to. But they represent also the passive government that leads the widows to rebel. The latter is visualized by running and jumping on the mattresses. As these mourning protocols are staged in multiple ways, *Iqhiya Emnyama* challenges the cultural elements that identify the mourning widow. Therefore, during the performance the constructed identity of the widows is revised. As the image of the widow is dislocated and consequently defamiliarized, it can invoke "uncomfortable parallels or fresh interpretations." 56

Both performances, *Mari and Kana* and *Iqhiya Emnyama*, show revised traditional mourning customs and play with cultural and spectators' expectations. Hence, they both enact alternative identities in a public space and facilitate a "politics of recognition," in "which the audience can recognize the humanity of the performers" or than the

social construct of their widowhood. This recognition does not only produce a potential effect on the personal and social identity of the performers as widows, but it also has political repercussions. Under Butler's assertion, "for politics to take place, the body must appear;" these performances provide opportunities for intrinsic mutual processes of recognition between the spectator and the performer and for this space to become political.

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

The Maid Vanishes

Silvija Jestrovic

ABSTRACT This essay begins with two brief accounts—one of arrival and the other of vanishing. It was the late summer of 2005 when we—my partner, young daughter, and I—moved to the UK, where I was to take up a lectureship at the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick. I [...]

This essay begins with two brief accounts—one of arrival and the other of vanishing. It was the late summer of 2005 when we—my partner, young daughter, and I—moved to the UK, where I was to take up a lectureship at the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick. I came on a Tier 4 working visa, to last for two years, after which I had a choice of either applying for Permanent Residence or UK citizenship. Given that we were coming on Canadian passports (we had emigrated to Toronto in 1995 from the former Yugoslavia as landed immigrants and acquired Canadian citizenship three years later), the whole process of this second immigration was smooth and easy, at least from the administrative point of view. It had eventually added to our experience of having multiple passports and various visas as we have been exercising modes of, what Aihwa Ong (1999), called "flexible citizenship." 1

We chose to live on campus for the first year, in one of the university-owned cottages, tucked away in a small woodland across the road from modern University buildings. On our arrival at Cryfield Cottages, as this housing for new staff and post-graduate students with families was called, a group of children ran to the gates to greet us. Some of our new neighbors emerged shortly after, helped with the luggage and offered to take us to the near-by supermarket. The families, living in rows of identical red-brick cottages, were from all over the world. There was the Filipino couple with a little daughter, the Egyptian family with three kids, the French-Canadians, the Italian family relocating from London for a post at Warwick, the Saudi family with two boys and an Indian nanny, the Singaporean who always complained about the poor internet connection, and the Malaysians in the only detached cottage (I still have the hand-painted tablecloth they gave me as a parting gift a year later). From the moment we walked through the gate and onto the sun kissed communal garden peppered with scattered toys, we became part of this accidental community—a community that could easily be framed as an illustration of the narrative found in Arjun Appadurai's argument for a postnational global order. Appadurai coins the term "ethnoscape" to describe "the landscape of persons who constitute a shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups and individuals." We were indeed one such landscape—a micro ethnoscape—in a somewhat unexpectedly bucolic setting.

When the boys were at school and her employers at work, the Indian nanny/maid would go for walks—her itinerary consisted of making full circles around the communal garden. I had never seen her leaving or returning from somewhere off the premises. I was outside, hanging washing to dry, when she approached and we started to chat. She was from

Northern India, working for the Saudi family. She did their housework and helped with the children. They arrived to the UK shortly before us; she came with the family as domestic help. Her own children were grown up, so she was able to take the job. She sent her earnings to her family in India. She spoke confidently about this arrangement almost with a sense of pride. The deal, she claimed, was really good: the employers covered everything, she had no expenses and she was making \$35. "A day?" I asked. "\$35 a month...." We both spoke in somewhat broken English, trying to adjust our ears to each other's accent. So, I thought I misunderstood and kept pressing on: "... \$35 a day you mean?" "\$35 a month. That's good money," she said firmly. "Oh, all right," was all I muttered, a bit more might have been written on my face as conflicting thoughts sped through my mind: Should I tell her that \$35 a month is way below minimal wage in the UK as she is indeed working here now? She speaks with such pride of how she is able to support her family, who am I to tell her she is not doing as well as it appears to her? Yet she is practically exploited, how can I not say anything? Maybe it is a language thing after all, maybe she somehow mispronounced the amount. We exchanged polite goodbyes; she went on with her walk, I went on with my washing.

This was the last time I saw her. In the days to follow it rained heavily, the communal garden was deserted, scattered toys lay lifeless in the wet grass, I hardly saw any of my neighbors. One evening there was a knock on the door. A rain-soaked policeman stood in front of me. They were going door-to-door asking if anyone had seen something unusual or suspicious lately. The Indian maid, who worked for the Saudi family in cottage number nine, had vanished without a trace. Has anyone known her a bit more? Has anyone talked to her? She did not take anything. She left all her belongings in the house. Even her passport.

Semiotics of Vanishing: Scenarios of Representation and Modes of Reconstruction

Nearly ten years later, as I joined the project "Gender Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance," I realized, somewhat unexpectedly, that my research on the subject should start with the Indian maid, our encounter by the washing line and the scenarios of her disappearance. The question is, where does this story of disappearance belong? How do I speak about it given that its main protagonist is absent, unable to provide her own account of the events? Where is its protagonist situated within various modes of investigation and representation? How is she shaped through different narratives, from the text of the police appeal and her employer's reaction, to my own recollection and imagination? Can she be identified within abstract theories of transnational citizenship and more concrete data emerging from social research into domestic labor and migration? My investigation, however, is not so much trying to resolve the disappearance as it is trying to find its context. The dramaturgy of the police investigation is seen here as a linear one—unfolding by rules of cause and effect, with eyes on the resolution. My investigation is more of a Brechtian kind, aiming at understanding how and why it happened. The goal is not so much to recollect and resolve, but to defamiliarize the recollection. Yet I will still play detective a bit looking for clues and signs in obvious places —the site of our encounter and of her vanishing; and in somewhat less obvious ones critical theory and sociology.

Following the disappearance, the police issued a public appeal to trace the missing woman. I had not seen the appeal at the time, I found it only recently as I was researching for this project. The text provided some new information such as the exact age of the woman (46) at the time she vanished, and her name. It also recorded the precise date and time of her disappearance and it confirmed the image of her that has stayed in my

memory: her dark-colored, long kurta, and the zip-up fleece cardigan to keep her warm. It evoked the narrative that had started to emerge within the Cryfield community following her disappearance, too. According to that narrative, the woman wondered off on a whim, possibly in a moment of irrationality, leaving all her possessions behind, including her passport. The only thing she might have taken with her was a Bible. The text of the police appeal conjured, yet again, the image of a disoriented woman wandering the fields of the surrounding countryside, the Bible clutched in her hands. A moment of mental instability, a psychotic episode, perhaps? Maybe she was suicidal (her body was never found, though). "She was left on her own with the children so often, luckily nothing happened to them," reflected a neighbor. One person recalled seeing an unknown man in front of cottage number nine a day before the maid's disappearance, sheltering in the doorway, waiting for somebody. However, the police appeal pointed out that the Indian nanny was "unknown to anyone in the UK" beyond the family she arrived with and the Cryfield community. The police drafted a profile of a foreign woman through the narrative of her employers and glimpses of her collected from the Cryfield neighbors who, admittedly, barely knew her. The man in the doorway remained an inconclusive lead, so the narrative emerging from the police appeal resembled essentially a well-known trope: it was a migrant version of "the mad woman in the attic." 3

My own recollection of her disappearance has until recently also been grounded in literature. It begins a few nights before the disappearance, with cries coming from the darkness of the woodland encircling the cottages. The cries sound like a child in terrible distress, yet there is something nonhuman in this unbearable howling. Not a single soul in the rows of red-brick cottages can sleep. The children are getting restless. Adults, alarmed, gather in the communal garden, staring into the darkness behind the cottages—into the invisible out of which this unbearable, inexplicable sound appears to haunt us all. "It's a fox," somebody finally dispels the terror. In my literary imagination though, the connection between the uncanny nocturnal sound and the disappearance of the maid were too evocative to ignore. Even more to it was in the names: the *Cryfield* Cottages situated on *Gibbet Hill* Road, named after a scaffolding for public hanging, the gibbet, that used to stand there. So, inevitably, the genre of my recollection of the maid's disappearance evolved into a ghost story. My contextualization of events, unfolding along the cryptographic leads in the tradition of Edgar Allan Poe, and the narrative constructed through the police appeal, had something in common though—both were apolitical.

Private/Rights

When, a few months ago I walked through the gates of the Cryfield housing estate for the first time since we moved out, I was armed with a camera. I was trying to find another way to frame the case of the maid's disappearance. It was early afternoon of a grey day; the place was quiet and sleepy, just as it used to be on such days when I lived there. I pointed my camera towards the doors and windows of the red-brick cottages, I zoomed on cottage number nine, I lifted the camera towards the sky, then I turned it towards the woods, I zoomed in on the lost toys hidden behind bushes, boots in doorways, a stroller, a curious string of home-made sausages drying on a washing stand...



These objects emerged as evidence of daily life amidst the unusual stillness of the communal landscape. At first I recognized a ghosted site, reinforced by the presence of objects that trigger memories of daily life in Cryfield and absence of people. The place appeared the same as when I had lived there: if I knocked on the door of Cottage number one (where we used to live), a ten years younger version of myself with a toddler in tow might have answered. Then I did the walk, the maid's daily stroll—a few circles around the garden passing by the back entrances to the cottages. I let the camera capture the images on the path, variations perhaps of what she saw during these moments she had to herself.



On the second round, already the walk felt monotonous and repetitive. And very lonely. My memories of life in the Cryfield Cottages have always centered on the communal, on the sense of belonging to an instantaneous transnational community. If anything, this set-up circumvented one of the typical syndromes of exilic experience—loneliness. Yet, this simple, self-conscious act of walking in the footsteps of someone else made me question what I had remembered: how did we belong to this small transnational community? Did we all belong in the same way? Did we all have the same coordinates of outside and inside—did we have the same options of mobility? On the third stroll round the cottages, what once seemed like a transnational heterotopia suddenly started to feel like a lonely, liminal space—a non-place (in Auge's sense of the term⁴), with no connection to the outside. A

paper by Sabika al-Najjar, published by the International Migration Program in Geneva, offers a possible glimpse into the life of the Indian nanny within the mini-"ethnoscape" of the Cryfield Cottages:

Domestic workers are making a big sacrifice by leaving their homes, to seek work overseas in an unknown world. For most of them, the move to the Gulf is also the first time they leave their village or town. Many immigrants consider the different Gulf States as the land of opportunity. The reality is far different from that. Their days consist of heavy and long hours of work, loneliness in a society that is totally strange to them.⁵

The Cryfield cottage was the second place of migration for the Indian nanny, and possibly yet another strange place within which she was cast as the Other.

My next strategy was to capture images connected to domesticity and domestic labor: a broken peg in the grass, rows of empty washing lines, even the sausages drying outside...



Then I tried to penetrate a bit deeper into the interiors, aiming the long camera lens at the windows, trying to see through, to capture objects and images of domestic work. A woman looked at me through the window suspiciously; even though I was quite far she must have felt the intrusion and quickly drew the curtain back. I captured a few things: kitchen utensils, pots, a shopping bag, a flickering television screen in cottage number nine.



Another woman came to the door to ask if I was a Cryfield resident. All in all, I got very little "evidence" to piece together a possible scenario of domestic life and labor behind the curtains and closed doors of the cottages—and I was already on the verge of invading the residents' privacy. However, my failed attempt to capture the images speaks a lot about the nature of domestic labor in general, and the Indian nanny's job in particular. Domestic labor follows the pattern of domestic life—it unfolds in the private domain, it is hidden from view, and what we see from the outside may not be what it is on the inside.

The private nature of domestic labor poses a difficulty when it comes to protecting the rights of domestic workers. Today, we find an increasing number of international resolutions concerning migrant workers' rights (i.e. the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of, two conventions on migrant workers by the International Labour Organisation $\frac{1}{2}$). In his book The Inhuman Condition, Pengh Cheah explores the axiomatic link between transnational migration and actualization of humanity in relation to the rights of female domestic labor. He points out that even though these resolutions emphasize gender equality and equal treatment of indigenous and migrant workers, "the male worker remains the implicit norm of the migrant worker." The notion of equal treatment also proves irrelevant in the area of domestic work because, as Cheah argues, "indigenous domestic workers are also generally not protected by the labor laws of host countries because of the patriarchalideological prejudice that reproductive work is 'private' in character and was traditionally unpaid." Bahrain, which has one of the biggest influxes of migrant domestic workers from India and Southeast Asia, is the case in point. The Bahrain "Labour Law for the Private Sector" (1976) exempts "domestic servants and persons as such" from the purview of the law. $\frac{10}{10}$ The exemption is due to the private nature of housework. "House workers are treated as a part of the family," said a Ministry of Labour spokesman. "Disputes should be settled internally whenever possible. Or else the privacy of households is desecrated". 11

Cheah warns that, in general, domestic workers are in an especially precarious situation because they are isolated in their respective households and closed to public scrutiny" 12. In her article "Contract Enslavement of Female Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates," Romina Halabi backs Cheah's point focusing on the context of migrant labor within which our Indian maid also happened to be situated. Due to the individualized working environment of household labor, migrant women working as domestic help "are the group most vulnerable to exploitation in Saudi Arabia and UAE. Domestic workers are often denied freedom of movement, and are either locked inside or forbidden to leave home without permission". 13 This, of course, takes us back to the circular walks—the daily routine of the Indian maid in Cryfield Cottages—and why did she never leave the grounds of the cottages until the day she vanished? Was she forbidden by her employers to go beyond the premises of Cryfield? Was the outside world too foreign for her, so she preferred to stay within its parameters? Was she what Cheah, drawing on Foucault, describes as a product of bio-power—a form of being that is essential to production itself? He writes:

It is assumed that domestic workers are free individuals who can consent or refuse to work in a given household. But this insistence on free consensual subject[s] masks the ubiquitous operations of biopolitics. For the consensual subject is always already a product of biopolitics. 14

Kafala

"But why did she not take her passport?" I asked. We ran into each other in a cafeteria at Warwick University, the former employer of the vanished Indian nanny and I. "To slip through the immigration net more easily," she said in a tone of resignation. "What do you think happened to her?" I followed up. "She found a better opportunity. It happens all the time. You take them with you, you pay for them...but as soon as they find something better they run away." But why did she run away, could she not just quit? An answer came from Halabi's research:

Relying on employment agencies and brokers, migrant domestic workers enter contractual bondage with employers whom they have never met before, leaving themselves vulnerable to abuse and exploitation....In order for a migrant to work in Saudi Arabia or the UAE, she must first secure a visa through a method of sponsorship known as *kafala*, which legally binds the worker to her employer. Although both the sponsor and the worker are capable of breaking the contract, this ostensible equality is merely a ruse, because if the worker breaks her contract, she must pay the cost of her return ticket (a charge that would otherwise be paid by her sponsor). She may also be found or forced to pay debts to the recruitment agency. Through the system of sponsorship, the fate of the migrant worker is entirely dependent upon the goodwill of an employer who, at any time, can threaten her deportation if unsatisfied. Once in their host countries, these migrants are immediately required to surrender their passports to their employers." 15

If we quickly look back at the appeal issued by the Warwickshire police, the most puzzling details of the case could be seen in a different light now: the Indian maid left with almost no money, she did not take any credit cards, and she left her passport behind, as well. Why did she not take money? Because she did not have it. She said she made \$35 a month (Halabi writes, salary in Saudi Arabia for migrant domestic help is up to \$100 a month, most women get less, and some do not even get paid). Why did she not take any credit cards? Because she did not have any. Why did she not take her passport? The passport might have been in the possession of her employers and she might have not had access to it. And why she simply did not quit? Because she might have been under a *kafala* sponsorship contract, which made it practically impossible for her to break the contract.

Another question arises: who protects the rights of the Indian maid in this circumstance and how are they to be implemented? And more broadly, how do notions of Kantian universal human rights apply to her, if at all? This is also where Appadurai's transnational regime still falls short, unfortunately. Cheah writes:

Traditionally, the protection of migrant workers has been largely to do with the domestic law of host countries because international law sets only minimal standards for treatment of aliens, such as the guarantee of the right of fair trial, human treatment in prison, and protection against arbitrary seizure of property. $\frac{16}{2}$

Cheah asserts further that: "the migrant female domestic worker's human rights can be effectively protected in the present or near future only by affirming the importance of political citizenship or membership in the nation-state." 17 For such rights to be claimed successfully, "labour-sending states need to have a strong bargaining position and the political will to demand just treatment for their workers," 18 so that they do not disappear into the "woods" of the transnational enthoscape.

The Indian migrant maid does not take place in the world of neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism $\frac{19}{1}$ nor in the scholarship of new universalism that has been, as Janelle Reinelt argues, pushing to do away with identity politics as outdated and even misguided. Reinelt, exploring both the shortcomings of universalism and the dangers of overdifferentiation when it comes to citizenship, points out the need to view and understand citizenship in its full complexity—including aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality not just as a document that protects individual legal rights. $\frac{20}{2}$ The Indian maid embodies this complexity, as a need for renewed identity politics to include different social strata and more varied geographies, while pointing to the limitation of citizenship as merely a legal category through which one's rights have been protected. The limitations of legal citizenship, as this story of disappearance shows, is practical, as her rights could not have been effectively protected and she got lost in the gaps between legal systems of different countries. It is also ethical, epitomizing both the neoliberal denial of "any contextual or cultural markers beyond individual legal status" 21 (which here in itself becomes elusive) and the fine line between differentiation and discrimination in the context of international migrant labor. Cheah's notion of political citizenship calls for implementation of more vigorous laws on the part of home nation-states. Yet, for this political citizenship to materialize judicially a political public sphere is needed within which, as Reinelt suggests, different iterations of citizenship could be performed as they become "conditioned by many factors and subject to dramaturgies of savagery as well as hospitality." 22

Feminization of Labor

The figure of the female domestic worker is not new; what is new is the sheer number of female migrant workers and the very long distances they travel. Barbara Erenreich writes, "Immigration statistics show huge numbers of women in motion, typically from poor countries to rich;" 23 hence the term feminization of labor has emerged in recent scholarship to describe the trend. In their study *Gender Dimensions of International Migration from Bangladesh and India: Socio-Economic Impact on Families Left Behind*, Ranjana Kumari and Ischrat Schamin confirm:

Feminization of international labor migration is a global trend. The percentage of women in the migrant population (both permanent immigrants and temporary migrants) has been increasing in the post-war period, and now women comprise the majority of international migrants.²⁴

Accordingly, Cheah identifies that another kind of cosmopolitanism "coexists with the high-end cosmopolitanism of talented professionals as its polar opposite: the cultural practice of the underclass foreign domestic helpers." In *Global Woman*, Barbara Erenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschield make a similar point:

Thanks to the process we loosely call "globalization," women are on the move as never before in history. In images familiar to the West from television commercials for credit cards, cell phones, and airlines, female executives jet about the world, phoning home from luxury hotels and reuniting with eager children in airports. But we hear much less about a far more prodigious flow of female labor and energy: the increasing migration of millions of women from poor countries to rich ones, where they serve as nannies, maids and sometimes sex workers. 26

At the end, let's go back to our encounter—the maid and me chatting by the washing line—and see where we stand within this framework of *feminization of labor*. We were both double migrants (her trajectory: India-Saudi Arabia-UK; my trajectory ex-Yugoslavia-Canada-UK). The two of us were the only two women on the small university housing estate who were neither students nor spouses of students or employees. We happened to be the only two women in the Cryfield Cottages at that time who came to the UK to work and supported our families with our earnings (albeit on alarmingly different salaries). Nevertheless, as far as our employment rights, immigration status, freedom to access our rights, and perhaps even our freedom of movement were concerned, we could not have been further apart.

Austrian playwright Peter Handke has a play entirely without words, called *The Hour We Knew Nothing of One Another*. It features various figures passing each other in a variety of constellations, temporarily shaping the space of their encounter. The pace accelerates, then slows down, then accelerates again as the figures briefly encounter one another before continuing their separate ways. There are moments in the play when it seems that these accidental encounters could almost give rise to a community, but then the figures disperse in various directions and the place is empty again. The semiotics of these bodies passing each other offers some glimpses of who they might actually be, but the encounters are too short, and it is not really possible to further follow anyone's story. The figures remain strangers to one another. After all, the encounter by the washing line outside our Cryfield Cottages cannot fully resist literary framing: it belongs to the world of Handke's play—it was indeed a moment "we knew nothing of one another."

Notes

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- 3. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979). 2
- 4. Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London, New York: Verso, 1995), 75–116.
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- 6. UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx
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- 8. Pheng Cheah, *Inhuman Condition: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 193.
- 9. Ibid., 194. 🔁
- 10. Bahrain Labour Law for the Private Sector, 1976, accessed May 10, 2016, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/666/The%20Labour%20Law%20for%20the%20Private%20Sector.pd
 The revised version of Bahrain's Law for the Private Sector was implemented in 2012. This new version recognized more rights for women including more equality in wages, maternity leave of six months maximum, and breaks of up to one hour to breastfeed children, etc. However, according to Article 2 of the 2012 law, most of it stipulations still do not apply to: "Domestic servants and persons regarded as such namely gardeners, house security guards, nannies, drivers and cooks carrying out their job duties for the benefit of an employer or his relatives." See Kingdom of Bahrain Ministry of Labour, "The Labour Law for the Private Sector," 2012, accessed
- 11. al-Najjar, "Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Bahrain," 19. 🔁
- 12. Cheah, Inhuman Condition, 194.
- 13. Romina Halabi, "Contract Enslavement of Female Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates," *Human Rights & Human Welfare* (2008), accessed January 19, 2016, http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/slavery/fmd.pdf: 44. 2

May 10, 2016, http://www.rrc.com.bh/media/141168/labour law 2012 1 .pdf. 2016

- 14. Cheah, Inhuman Condition, 220.
- 15. Halabi, "Contract Enslavement," 43. 🔁
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å Bio

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Circuits of Invisibility: Performance, Violence, and Sexuality

Analola Santana

ABSTRACT The body is a repository of metaphors and within its function of global exchange, its limits of fragility and destruction, the body serves as a way of dramatizing the social text. Olivier Mongin, in his important study on film and modernity, has said that there is currently an "economía de las imágenes de violencia... [en [...]

The body is a repository of metaphors and within its function of global exchange, its limits of fragility and destruction, the body serves as a way of dramatizing the social text. Olivier Mongin, in his important study on film and modernity, has said that there is currently an "economía de las imágenes de violencia... [en la que el sujeto] contempla una violencia imaginada en un laboratorio, una violencia *in vitro* que no le concierne." This position, which is in dialogue with Susan Sontag's notions on war photography in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, refers to media consumption of images based on the suffering of the other. The image consumed may cause pain and sometimes compassion. Yet, as images of violence are adjusted to the expectations of a market economy (which allows viewers that are sensitive to the phenomenon of violence the possibility of not having to *deal with it* closely), our protected emotional responses become a mechanism of convenient defense against this violence. In other words, Sontag warns us that we have become, "citizens of modernity, consumers of violence as spectacle, adepts of proximity without risk." ²

Within the economy of representation, the brutalized body has a complicated, yet privileged place. Much of the complexity that makes representations of violence move and disturb the viewer—but from *far away*—seems to come from the ambiguous status of the body as *vulnerable* and deserving of special care. This idea, though, also exists within an ambivalence regarding our contemporary understanding of the body. On the one hand, the body has more than ever acquired a status of universal protection, in large part by the declaration of the right to personal integrity as fundamental, which is in line with human rights discourses. On the other hand, as expressed by Judith Butler regarding the War on Terror, "some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable life and a grievable death?" This ambivalent dichotomy, in which the body is protected legally but in which certain bodies continue to be consistently and systematically violated, no doubt conditions the generation and reception of texts in the economy of images of violence.

What determines the value of a body, then, becomes the central question for the performances with which this essay engages. *Piedra* (*Stone*), by Guatemalan performance artist Regina José Galindo, deals in particular with the social abuse inflicted upon the female body. It was specifically created for the 2013 "Encuentro" of the Hemispheric

Institute of Performance and Politics in São Paolo, Brazil. Similarly, *Corpos: Migraciones en la Oscuridad* (*Corpos: Migrations in the Dark*) tackles this question as a performance piece/installation based on one particular aspect of the abused body: the trafficking of women and young girls for sexual gains. A co-production by three artists, Violeta Luna (Mexico), Mariana González Roberts (Argentina), and Rocío Solís (Spain), the piece was first presented at the Ibero-American Theatre Festival in Cádiz, Spain in 2011 and has since been presented in several countries throughout the Americas.

In the context of human trafficking and violence against women, I am particularly interested in the ways in which performance practices can become avenues for producing political expressions that, at the very least, become a form of protest and evidence for the manifestation of ideas that could otherwise remain invisible (as unspeakable horrors).⁵ Are theatre and performance able to aesthetically transform political ideas into creative images that lead to awareness and social action? With regard to female sex trafficking, the reality is particularly dire, as these women function in a stateless limbo where they are often regarded as "illegal migrants." Even as most have been forcefully removed from their country of origin, they exist in systems of coerced migration for the purpose of exploiting their bodies. This network of modern day slavery, which controls its victims through psychological and physical violence, is tied to a culture of gendered violence and misogynistic values that global society, and Latin American society in particular, has been unable to overcome. Trafficking is a growing transnational process; the primary victims are women precisely because they are unprotected by the state. As Janice Phaik Lin Goh explains, "women are objectified and commoditized, deprived individual rights, and they are seen as an 'anomaly' by the state, law, and society." 7

Adding to this history of violence are neoliberal practices of commercial expansion that promote the displacement of and systematic rape and violence against women (especially indigenous women) as multinational conglomerates seek to use land and resources in Latin America for economic gain. Thus, in this constant search for wealth, as Saskia Sassen has said when talking about the "survival circuits" of the global south: "Prostitution and migrant labor are increasingly popular ways to make a living; illegal trafficking in women and children for the sex industry, and in all kinds of people as laborers, is an increasingly popular way to make a profit." For the purposes of this essay, I want to consider the ways in which performance activists have engaged politically, socially, and culturally with this prevalent issue that tragically connects women (in particular) throughout the world in a web of economic exchange. Precisely because the voice of the victim is not heard through the language of the state and economic capitalism, the aesthetics of performance can provide the conceptual structures to hear those voices, even if it is dependent on something as basic as producing a moment of awareness in the spectator. Piedra, the performance piece by Galindo, allows for a more abstract reflection on the subject of violence inflicted upon women, while Corpos presents a more specific and tangible discussion of sexual violence and human trafficking. Even though both pieces deal with similar themes, in terms of the ethics of spectatorship to leverage justice they are fundamentally different. Whereas the audience of Corpos is asked to reflect on and engage the theme of human trafficking and violence against women in a prescriptive and literal sense, the spectators of Galindo's piece can simply watch the performance, leaving the piece without a concrete space for reflection in the immediate moment.

Piedra

In Galindo's performance the artist's body remains motionless, covered in charcoal, like a stone. Throughout the thirty-minute performance she never moves, even as two male volunteers (fellow artists whom Galindo had previously contacted and who have agreed on the choreography of the piece) and one improvised female audience member (an

unexpected participation) urinate over her still body. The performance begins when a small, thin woman (Galindo) covered in charcoal from head to toe walks through the outdoor patio where the spectators have gathered. She stops in the middle and curls into a ball on the hard floor. As she bends down and rounds her back, knees and elbows cuddled against her ribs, an assistant covers the last piece of visible skin (the soles of her feet) with charcoal. The aesthetic choice of using charcoal to cover her body is, of course, a reference to the violent abuses of the mining industry in Brazil as well as many other Latin American countries, where often the most exploited victims of this colossal industry are female laborers trapped in a structure of violence and economic ambition that affects their health and livelihood. Completely covered with coal, the body of the artist remains motionless, her face buried in the palms of her hands. The audience around her, who at first brought out cameras and other recording devices to capture her always-intense performances, remains quiet around her, awaiting an action from the artist. Yet, the artist remains motionless.

This series of actions forms part of her overall performance poetics regarding the suffering of the female body. In a poem she wrote as part of this performance (which is not recited, but a part of the performance dossier), she states:

Soy una piedra no siento los golpes la humillación las miradas lascivas los cuerpos sobre el mío el odio.

Soy una piedra en mí la historia del mundo.¹⁰



Photo credit: Marlene Ramírez-Cancio.

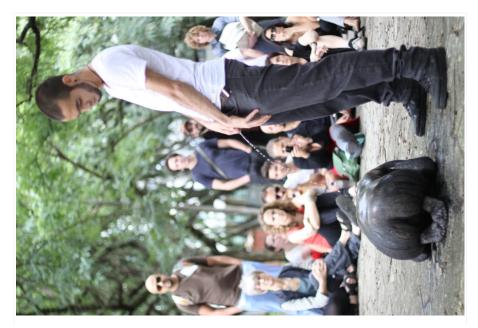
Working with these metaphors, Galindo is able to produce a very literal performance (regardless of its aesthetic abstraction) about violence and pain, humiliation and exploitation. The purpose of Galindo's piece is quite obvious, as she explains when talking about her performance:

Sobre el cuerpo de las mujeres latinoamericanas ha quedado inscrita la historia de la humanidad. Sobre sus cuerpos conquistados, marcados, esclavizados, objetualizados, explotados y torturados pueden leerse las nefastas historias de

lucha y poder que conforman nuestro pasado. Cuerpos frágiles solamente en apariencia. Es el cuerpo de la mujer que ha sobrevivido la conquista y esclavitud. Que como piedra ha guardado el odio y el rencor en su memoria para transformarlo en energía y vida. $\frac{11}{2}$

It is only through the figurative (and poetic) transformation of woman into stone that she can narrate the history of violence against Latin American women (and women in general). Considering the multitude of instances of violence in her own country of Guatemala, Galindo was particularly inspired in this piece by the ways in which pain can be somatized as a form of social criticism. This is especially true if one is to consider that what Galindo sees as the constant violence in her society, though directed primarily at men's bodies, has a different dialogue when it is conducted though the bodies of women. Galindo's performance represents the most common scenario of violence: "Cuando se hacen análisis, la cuestión es que a los hombres se les dispara siempre, y los cuerpos que han sido asesinados amanecen con un tiro de gracia. A la mujer, previamente a asesinarla, siempre se le tortura, generalmente a través de violencia sexual." 12 The bodies of women, then, suffer an additional humiliation: they are marked by rape to prove that they are a surface upon which to describe a systematic practice of pain and injustice in a failed political and social globalized project of economic expansion. In the performance, Galindo aims to represent the tension found in those moments of humiliation and to take that pain to an extreme in order to annihilate the individual and leave only a body.

As a radical practitioner of body art, Galindo uses her own body as a tool for social and political action. She has often described her work as a way of constructing a "human bridge" between people and places, oftentimes using spaces that carry a significant weight of violence and abuse. Galindo, at least for a moment, is able to resignify or denounce the actions upon these spaces through her performances, which allows for a more empathic understanding of power, life, and death. In *Piedra*, Galindo links a history of environmental exploitation with a colonial structure of dominance and abuse against the bodies of women. Thus, the tragic narrative of a nation (in this case Brazil, though it can be extended to many other countries) rests on the abused body of one woman. Throughout the performance, her body does not move, and ten minutes after the start a man, who appears as part of the group of people that have accumulated around the artist (though he is one of the aforementioned artists who is part of the performance), breaks off and walks toward her. He unzips his pants, pulls out his penis, and proceeds to urinate on that motionless and blackened body.



This is, obviously, a very shocking and violent image: the stream of urine draws grooves and channels down the charcoal that sticks to her body, dripping down to her face and falling off her fingers. The absolute silence around the action itself (which extends to the audience who only observes without outward expressions of emotion) forces the question of how to communicate or make visible trauma and abuse if language is taken away. As spectators of this action, we are only left with the sensorial: a communicable experience of trauma. This is an experience of pain and humiliation that elicits a sense of subordination on the part of the artist complicit with the submissive positionality of Latin American women as perceived by most of society. Galindo's piece is problematic precisely because it re-produces scenarios of violence through a performance practice which is later justified by the reflection from the audience. Even though Galindo's point of departure is to denounce violence through a violent act itself, the issue of spectatorial ambiguity remains. This leads to the questions: Is a horrible act represented or repeated again when it is allowed to happen without resistance—especially when witnessed by a group of people who become a "public"?

The pain and humiliation present in the performance remind us that a misogynistic society has taught us that women are conquered through emotional and physical pain or, as Veena Das explains, "pain is the medium through which society establishes ownership of individuals." 13 Thus, *Piedra* connects with the spectator through a voyeuristic relationship established around the action itself. We are witnesses to the pain and suffering of the artist, while the temporal demands of the performance makes us aware of the options we have as we choose to remain present or not during the piece: to stay might imply enduring, in a way, "along with" Galindo. The cruelty we are actively experiencing acts as a signifier of a Latin American reality, and the vulnerability of her body (which appears to have no agency before the actions thrust upon it) has an obvious affect upon the observers.

In *Piedra* the performance itself is not the artist's body, but the action that this body allows upon it. As it lies there, exposed, it loses any form of control or agency, and this opens the way for the spectator to be exposed as well. We stand around this vulnerable body in silence, unwilling to intervene (because we are aware of the role of the audience as observer), but receiving the impact of such an action. At the same time, one must recognize the possibility of identifying with both sides, and this raises the question: if one identifies with the woman/stone while at the same time recognizing a possible identification with the man who urinates on her body, what imaginary mechanisms are mobilizing this identification (in relation to issues of abuse and power)? Does this imply competing scopic regimes that we strive to mediate to maintain a sense of morality? What is the potential for audience members to reflect on issues of accountability and justice in relation to the witnessing of violence?

In this sense, the performance constitutes a marker of that which is most horrific in society (violence and trauma), but it appears through an abstract image to achieve a different affect upon the observer: to make the audience a witness or at least allow for the possibility of questioning our reactions to the piece as a witness who is concerned with the action before them. This is in line with Giorgio Agamben's notion of the *potentiality* found in the witness for the possibility of commitment and responsibility:

[T]estimony is the disjunction between two impossibilities of bearing witness; it means that language, in order to bear witness, must give way to a non-language to show the impossibility of bearing witness. The language of testimony is a

language that no longer signifies and that, in not signifying, advances into what is without language, to the point of taking on a different insignificance–that of the complete witness, that of he who by definition cannot bear witness. 14

Thus, at the very least, the performance brings out the possibility of responsibility from the audience as witness. As difficult as it is to gauge audience reaction in this piece, the silence, stupefaction, and clear discomfort of those around Galindo when I saw it showed a shared intentionality as we were each clearly affected by the piece and those around us shared in the same moment. *Piedra* forces us to face the pain of other lives, to think of another, and, as Ileana Diéguez observes, "if we think and reflect from a space of pain without being direct victims, perhaps we are realizing that under the current conditions the inability to think of ourselves or imagine ourselves separate from the victims intensifies." In other words, we cannot readily choose between identifying or distancing ourselves, and this ambivalence produces the critical effect of the piece.

Ten more minutes pass by and Galindo continues perfectly immobile in the same position on the ground. A second man steps forward from the audience (again, a fellow artist who was part of the piece) and urinates onto her body. The clear lack of concern with which these men urinate on her points to the widespread apathy that is often found in regards to the safety and care of a woman's body. This theme is also a major concern within Galindo's artistic oeuvre. In *Piedra* the female body is represented as a stone precisely because both are objects conditioned (by nature and society) to withstand violent acts. Galindo chose the parallel between woman and stone precisely because she wished to negate the individual (as the act of violence does) but not the live body itself. And a stone is a natural object, which is characterized by its resilience. Even as this body in the performance is in a completely submissive position, what allows it to continue is the resilience with which it faces the humiliation and violence imposed upon it. The ease with which a man (whether it be within the performance or outside of it) is able to contaminate the female body through an apparently superficial action, such as emptying their bladder, is paralleled to the everyday violence that the female body encounters as it functions in the social order. This violence emphasizes the unconscious nature of everyday actions that drive a repetitive structural violence.

Thus, this "stone woman" is, at the same time, an ancient and natural structure (a timeless part of nature) and it performs as a disposable object of inherent exploitation. Galindo's body becomes an emblem of disposability, as useless as a stone on the road. Even more so, this performance in Brazil carries an additional connotation: these disposable bodies also include the workers in the huge industry of coal mining, which is the largest non-renewable energy resource in the country and the leading cause of water and land pollution. Besides the environmental damages brought on by multinational corporations that seek to find ways in which to augment their economic gains by exploiting foreign lands, there is the tragedy of women being raped and killed for protesting the expansions of these conglomerates. The two issues are tied together, as women are often the primary victims of sexual violence in the efforts to conquer economic expansion. Piedra, by means of a simple yet poetic action, manages to capture a local and global crisis: the harmful effects of coal mining on the environment, the plight of the exploited workers, and widespread structural violence against women that economic exploitation perpetuates.

Galindo has said that the history of violence has been recorded on the bodies of women, and this notion is complicated towards the end of the performance by an additional performer. The action of men urinating on the female body aligns femininity with nature and the bodies of men with the processes of violence and exploitation. Ten minutes after the second man has urinated on Galindo's body, a third figure steps forward. This time it is

a woman who comes toward the artist, plants her legs on either side of the stone/body, and urinates. It must be pointed out that this third volunteer was an unexpected participant, as she was not a part of Galindo's performance, but someone from the audience that decided to participate. In the original piece, a third man should have urinated on Galindo's body, but he was unable to because of this unknown woman's interference. The piece was carefully timed, so Galindo herself was not aware of this until after the performance, though she admits that this made it more interesting. The participation by this unknown woman reconstructs the argument around a male body perpetrating violence against a female body and at the same time implies that women are complicit in an intra-sexual violence. With this, Galindo's criticism folds back on itself to question the ways in which women enact violence on the bodies of other women.

The unexpected participation of this woman also raises important issues regarding agency and control in the piece. As an artist, Galindo has the agency of choreographing the elements of the performance. Yet, this unscripted moment takes away her own agency as she is left to experience an instance outside of her own control. Galindo's form of artistic agency is complicated for a single moment through the act of this woman from the audience. After a pause, Galindo slowly gets up and walks past the audience. The spectators are left behind. They watch her walk away as well as the trail of urine that she leaves in her wake. An important part of this performance is its framing: Galindo chooses to assume the position/identity of a stone at the beginning, but she is able to get up and walk away from it at the end. This action appears to indicate the strength and agency of women in spite of the violence done to them. Of course, one must acknowledge that Galindo's performance allows for the possibility to have this violence inflicted upon her in a momentary way through her own choice, whereas women who are subject to violence do not have that form of agency and protection. Women and stones share the ability to take abuse from their environment and survive continuous wear. Galindo's Piedra presents the images of women who suffer from an abject abuse for the purpose of reorganizing the vectors of power between the victim and the victimizer, while at the same time emphasizing the durability of the female body and spirit.



Corpos: Migraciones en la Oscuridad

This implicit pact between performer and spectator (as potential witnesses) is also a fundamental element in *Corpos: Migraciones en la Oscuridad*. The performance by Luna,

González, and Solís is composed as a series of galleries in which different aspects of the business of sex trafficking are explored along with its monetary, personal, emotional, and psychological consequences. It functions as a mixture of performance art, art installation, audio installation, and theatre that allows the spectator to be introduced into an ethical disjunction promoted by the consumption and economic gain of trafficked sexualities. In the performance, spectators are ushered through a scripted path that leads them through several rooms. Within these rooms, viewers are presented with images, scenarios, and poetic representations of sexual trafficking. Through the simplicity of its construction, these artists are able to implicate a double subjectivity for the audience, which provokes a sense of ambivalence similar to the process found in Galindo's piece.

At the beginning, audience members are standing in line to enter into the performance space: they are stamped on whichever part of the body they wish with the word "CORPOS." In the first room/scene, "General Meeting for the Shareholders," we are asked to take a seat. This becomes the conference room of the corporation CORPOS, where we are informed of our role as shareholders in one of the most successful companies in the world. From that moment on, as we travel through the different rooms of the performance space, we are framed by the fact that we inhabit them as shareholders in this company. The objective is clear: as performance artists and activists, the performers utilize the space to establish a dialogue with those violent practices that tragically connect different bodies at a global scale within a network of economic exchange. That is why it is important from the beginning that we be informed of the profits that are made from trafficking in women and how well the company/we is/are doing. We then move on to the second room, where we drink wine and toast the company's success; we are transformed into the beneficiaries of sexual exploitation.

As we continue through the rooms that explicitly suggest different references and metaphors for human trafficking, we are disturbed by this identity we have willfully accepted as part of this suspension of disbelief. We inhabit the entire performance through this double discourse, as an audience member and a shareholder. But this double discourse also binds us together: we are not alone within the horror of the things that we are looking at and experiencing. This was one of the more interesting aspects of the installations, as audience members reacted in different ways to what we were all seeing, but were also aware of the "safety" afforded by experiencing these actions as a group. For example, one room staged the raping of a young girl: there was a pair of underwear on the floor that obviously belonged to a little girl, and one could hear a wheezing sound and see part of a mattress on the floor. The door was ajar, yet there were people who pushed it, in an attempt to see what was inside, which would mean wanting to see how this girl is raped.

This is not to say that those who tried to push the door open were simply perverse, but it helps us to understand the disturbances that the piece imposes on the audience member. Besides the (potential) desire/curiosity to see the rape, there are other possible readings for this spectator's action. The performance, as an avenue for political expression, allows the spectator a means through which to enact and rehearse embodied awareness and a possibility for social action when confronted with different stages of sexual and gendered violence. The observer has the potentiality for acting as participant. That is to say, the audience who experiences *Corpos* as a performative act is pushed to question the conventional distinction between "victim" and "aggressor" as it seems ill-suited to fully explain the results of this type of violence: (1) as a simple viewer who sees these things from a place that is not frequently seen, and (2) having accepted a welcome card, being stamped, having toasted, and so on, implicated as complicit in the benefits of this trade. What seems to be at the core of the performance is a clear call to reflection on our part,

because without customers and without a society that consumes people, this horror would not be possible. And, for a moment, the spectators are allowed to perform an interruption through their own actions (trying to open the door).

As the artists themselves have explained, the double discourse was a fundamental part of the performance. There is more to this than simply including the audience: it has to do with the fact that we are part of a system that more or less consciously includes us, and we share a responsibility in the existence of these horrors. As Luna explains,

Uno de los puntos fundamentales fue ver a esta mujer no como víctima sino como una sobreviviente dentro de un contexto social opresivo. Y que nosotros como espectadores sociales tenemos responsabilidad sobre esto, que cada acción, así como consumir pornografía, o seguir reproduciendo los estereotipos de género, automáticamente nos implica en esto. 17

This is not to deny that in specific scenarios certain parties take on an active role in the perpetuation of sexual violence, nor is it to ignore the destructive, often deadly intentions behind such actions. Rather, in the performance one can find an effort to situate the horror of sex-trafficking within a network of conflict whose complexities are forgotten in the binary language of domination and resistance. Conceiving of human trafficking purely in terms of cause and effect—and organizing against it around the theme of victimization—oversimplifies the intricate problem of human trafficking within a globalized and modern world.

This very important issue of audience response was closely related to the artists' recognition of the ethical connotations of representing the violence of this subject onstage. As the three artists agreed, there was a constant effort to avoid the victimization of the women whose stories they aimed to present—an effort that closely relates to what Wendy Brown contends through her concept of "wounded attachments." Brown argues that when we organize around identity, or what she names our "wounded attachments," we are compulsively repeating a painful reminder of our subjugation, and maintaining a cycle of blaming which continues the focus on oppression rather than transcending it. The desire to hold on to identity categories is a notion that is at the core of many contemporary political claims that radically de-historicize the experience of suffering and of harm, and in the end reproduce the spectacle of various communities as defined by the aggression that has affected them. In this way, "Persons are reduced to observable social attributes and practices defined empirically, positivistically, as if their existence were intrinsic and factual, rather than effects of discursive and institutional power." 18 The purpose of the performance is precisely to avoid such a characterization, as Mariana González Roberts explains:

Desde un principio coincidimos en que no presentaríamos casos puntuales, esas historias que son terribles la mayoría. Más bien buscamos entender que todas estas mujeres no son esta imagen que tenemos de seres que no tienen historia, que es lo mismo que les pasa a los inmigrantes, cuando dejamos nuestro país nos convertimos en "inmigrantes" nada más, cuando en nuestro país éramos alguien que tenía una vida, una historia y una serie de detalles. Ahora de repente formas parte de un colectivo. Es decir, ahora eres un inmigrante, ahora eres víctima de la violencia, ahora eres víctima de la trata. 19

So instead of specific stories, the performance evokes a series of emotions centered on poetic images that refuse to define an individual who is absent from representation.

This dependence on images is obvious from the beginning of the performance. In the second room, as we finish our toasts, the table from which we took our wine glasses

becomes illuminated from below and we can see a series of figures hanging under the table, followed by a woman's face with her mouth taped off, looking straight at us. This is an intricate image on the politics of visibility. The momentary appearance of this woman does not provide us with a particular narrative text; instead we are forced to recognize the emotions she has provoked. Since the route throughout the performance space is a movement through different rooms, the piece seems to articulate a structure based not on a traditional theatrical dramaturgy, but rather on a museum dramaturgy. The space is conceived from the visual arts perspective, as an installation space, a space that is intervened in or acted upon. The artists do not inhabit the space; instead the performance itself becomes a constant intervention upon the space. Each room has its own identity, and it is up to the audience to create a narrative for each space, as the movement through the rooms becomes a journey aimed to generate a personal consciousness. A wonderful example is the third room in the piece, "Intimate Landscape." It consists of a bed placed at an angle, a table with make-up and other discarded items, and a small closet with clothes. Each object has a recording in a very low voice that emanates from it. These objects become an extension of the absent body and the testimonial of those who are not there. In this way, the performance does not look for the morbidity that could be found around the subject of human trafficking. Rather, it proposes a series of sensations and images in relation to what happens in these horrendous situations. There is a presence/absence of the person, who does not appear, but this telling/claiming through objects can attest to the history of each particular suffering. The complex process of witnessing is further problematized as we, the audience, are prevented from "direct" contact with the "victim." This is a particular quality of violent acts that Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon consider: "Despite the potential for empathy facilitated by the photograph or the videotape—the sense that we, after looking, have 'really been there'—it is the experience of suffering that is most considerably lost when images of violence inundate the visual realm, acting as surrogates for productive transnational discourse. Violence, then, acquires its immense significance in a delicate pivot between the spectacular and the embodied." 20 What appears in the performance is not a victim to be pitied in a generalized manner; instead we find a subtle beauty that shows a very painful life story through objects and actions.



Photo credit: Analola Santana.



Photo credit: Manuel Fernández.

The inclusion of beauty (physically and poetically) within this representation acquires a greater purpose, as it carries great weight. The artists agreed that beauty became a crucial element that sustained them. As Rocío Solís explains: "Es un elemento que nos sostiene en el sentido de que no nos deja caer sólo en el horror del tema que se trata, sino que también nos cuenta la complejidad del ser humano, que es capaz de generar ese horror y también es capaz de generar belleza y humor." 21 For example, in the gallery titled "The Erring," a woman (Luna) lays still on the floor surrounded by lighted candles. The candles provide her "body outline." She suddenly stands, walks to a window, opens it, and a beautiful ocean view appears (note that this scene was only possible in the space used in Cádiz, that allowed for such a view). The walls in this room are plastered with newspapers offering grotesque and violent stories of death. Beauty is also a part of the representation of woman as object. In another room, the audience enters a space with an enormous giftbox in the middle. Upon closer inspection, we can see that it has a glass top and inside there is a beautiful woman (Solís), impeccably dressed in elegant lingerie. As an audience member, you can approach this box and observe/admire the woman inside. At the same time, a continual loop of world economic news is played throughout the room. This is the essence of human trafficking in the globalized world.



Photo credit: Manuel Fernández.



Photo credit: Analola Santana.

As Lydia Cacho asserts, to fully understand human sex trafficking we must acknowledge that mafias are now legal corporations, that prostitution is a successful industry, and that women and children are the primary product to be sold. The mafias that enable human

trafficking are a clear part of the nation state structure, since the laws against them are disconnected from cultural changes and because the twenty-first century is experiencing a backlash against feminism. Misogyny is clearly back, strengthened and with new marketing strategies; and really, it never left in many countries, it was simply disguised in politically correct discourses. We are part of a global culture that promotes the objectification of people as an act of liberty and progress for capitalism. Many women live enslaved before a dehumanizing market economy, imposed as our manifest destiny, and many assume prostitution is a minor problem, ignoring that within it lays human exploitation.



Photo credit: Manuel Fernández.

It is through the perturbed nature of these instances of beauty that sexuality acquires a different meaning. In the performance, any instance of eroticized sexuality disappears, so that we are left with an empty sexuality. In the gallery "The Lines of Memory," a young girl (Luna) appears among clotheslines, where clothes and bags filled with red liquid are hanging. She puts on a wig, smiles at the audience scattered around the room, grabs one of the bags, and proceeds to suck on it with brutal force. Her pain and discomfort at this selfinflicted action is obvious until the bag explodes and stains her white dress with the red liquid. Luna takes off the dress and moves around the room, hanging different members of the audience by their clothes and even their hair onto the clotheslines with pins, reflecting her violation, lack of freedom, and exhibition upon them. The scene is an obvious reference to the oral sex practices that are so common among child trafficking. Yet, the significance of the gesture is in the refusal to represent the practice in a literal manner; the performance does not focus on the pedophilic and erotic real event. Instead, there is a poetics to the act that visualizes a series of narrative possibilities. The images evoked in this space fit well with the next room, "Table Dance," where a woman (González) enters, puts on a pair of red heels, and abruptly takes off her dress. She stands naked before the audience and begins to dance seductively, but in a mechanical manner, while looking at each person intensely. All the while, different testimonies from sex-trafficking victims are projected upon the wall, and by extension, her body. When this naked woman intervenes upon the space, as an image that usually evokes an eroticized sexuality, the audience reacts in the opposite manner. Her naked body is "too close" to us; she looks directly into our eyes and it seems to fill us with shame. This is very similar way to how Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick describes it: "Shame floods into being as a moment, a disruptive moment in a circuit of identity-constituting identificatory communication. Indeed, like stigma, shame is itself a form of communication." 23 As we turn our faces and we avert our eyes the audience becomes aware of the trouble with the situation, or at least of the inverted

power dynamics. This causes a sense of vulnerability, which increases with the message projected upon on González Roberts' body and the wall.

In our everyday lives, we are constantly bombarded with images that show physical violence, which clarify how we are less protected as citizens. By placing political action as its central objective and presenting the vulnerability of the body, these performances make it possible to perceive an instance of healing through the recuperation of agency in the traumatized body. Thus, for a moment we are made aware of our own vulnerability. It is true that the law, as well as the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), says many things, but actual politics and economic crises establish a different reality. Besides creating policies, none of the international organizations that we assume protect human rights (ONU, UNESCO, OTI), do much concrete action to avoid violations. It is because of this reality that theatre and performance are and will be a necessary tool to expand and share these experiences of pain and shame. These instances of performance are one of the few ways that remain in force to carry out the notion of community as defined by Ileana Diéguez, when she says: "The representations of the absences, the staging and theatrics of pain, the performativities displayed by the communitas of mourners, are all forms of action for life, symbolic practices that emerge in the public space to make others visible, striving to give them a symbolic body against all the projects of disappearance and annihilation of individuals." 24 We live our lives before a sinister and contradictory message, which pushes us to become stronger and more "independent" (as a euphemism) consumers through neoliberal politics, while we are transformed into more vulnerable and unprotected citizens, not by the law, but by a permanent state of exclusion. To leverage justice for women under these circumstances is a difficult task, but these performances do that work through their insistence on public complicity and responsibility for these crimes against women, and indeed, against humanity.

Notes

- "economy of images of violence... {in which the subject} observes an imaginary violence in a laboratory, a violence in vitro which does not concern him or her."
 Olivier Mongin, Violencia y cine contemporáneo: Ensayo sobre ética e imagen (Spain: Editorial Paidós, 1994), 141-3. This and all subsequent translations are mine.
- 2. Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others (New York: Picador, 2003), 111.
- 3. It is important to consider that the nature of human rights is curious, as it is often met with suspicion even as it enjoys the support from various groups across the world. This is largely due to concerns about Western power, especially in societies that were ruled by colonial powers in the West. As Mark Hannam has explained, "It has become a commonplace strategy to appeal to human rights in order to make legitimate the case for political change; such strategies are used not just by the leaders of popular movements against their own governments, but also by governments themselves seeking to justify their interference in the domestic affairs of other states." Mark Hannam, review of *On Human Rights*, by James Griffin, *Democratiya* 15 (2008): 115. This is especially so because, despite the human rights tradition having originated in the West and being based on Western values, it claims universality. Thus, the discourses of human rights are often found at the core of violent interventions upon "under-developed" and "non-Western" nations as a challenge to their sovereignty in the name of human rights violations—even as these challenges often lead to the death of large numbers of civilians.
- 4. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York and London: Verso, 2006), 46.
- 5. Although the performers in my case studies are of Latin American and Spanish descent, their pieces are created not to represent specific cultural or geographical

manifestations of violence. Rather, these performances approach the topic of violence against women on a global perspective that acknowledges that these acts occur in various forms throughout the globe.

- 6. The United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act defines human trafficking as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by force, abduction, fraud, or coercion for forced or coerced labor, servitude, slavery, or sexual exploitation." Quoted in "Trafficking of Women: U.S. Policy and International Law," WeDo.com, last modified October 5, 2016, http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/trafficking.pdf.
- 7. Janice Phaik Lin Goh, "Deterritorialized Women in the Global City: An Analysis of Sex Trafficking in Dubai, Tokyo and New York," *intersection* 10, no. 2 (2009): 273
- 8. Saskia Sassen, "Global Cities and Survival Circuits," in *American Studies: An Anthology*, ed. Janice A. Radway, Kevin K. Gaines, Barry Shank, and Penny Von Eschen (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 188.
- 9. The abuses of the coal mining industry are present in various countries of Latin America, including Galindo's own nation of Guatemala. Since Galindo creates pieces based on the history of the country where she will perform them, she chose to focus on the exploitation of the mining industry in Brazil. Regina José Galindo, interviewed by Analola Santana, October 22, 2015.
- 10. I am a stone

I do not feel the blows

The humiliation

The leering stares

The bodies upon my own

The hate.

I am a stone

Upon me

The history of the world.

- 11. The history of humanity has remained inscribed on the bodies of Latin American women. On their bodies—conquered, marked, enslaved, objectified, exploited, and tortured—one can read the terrible stories of power and struggle that shape our past. Bodies are fragile only in their appearance. It is the female body that has survived conquest and slavery. Like a stone, it has stored the hatred and rancor of memory in order to transform it into energy and life. Regina José Galindo, "Piedra" (Performance documents from the "Encuentro" of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, 2013).
- 12. "When one conducts an analysis {of the situation}, the point is that men are always shot, and the murdered bodies appear the next day with a mercy shot. Women, on the other hand, are always tortured before they are murdered, and that always equals sexual violence." Regina José Galindo, interviewed by Analola Santana, October 22, 2015.
- 13. Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 35.
- 14. Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 39.
- 15. Ileana Diéguez, "Communitas of Pain: Performativities in Mourning," (Re)Positioning the Latina/o Americas: Theatrical Histories and Cartographies of Power, eds. Jimmy Noriega and Analola Santana (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), forthcoming.

- 16. A recent example can be found in a *New York Times* article that describes the gang rape of, at least, ten Mayan women in Guatemala at the hands of men who were evicting people (and setting their houses ablaze) from the village for the Canadian mining company Hudbay Mineral Inc. As the article states: "In a 2014 report, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, a policy group in Washington, concluded that Canadian companies, accounting for fifty percent to seventy percent of the mining in Latin America, were often associated with extensive damage to the environment, from erosion and sedimentation to groundwater and river contamination. Of particular note, it said, was that the industry 'demonstrated a disregard for registered nature reserves and protected zones.' At the same time, the report said, local people were being injured, arrested or, in some cases, killed for protesting." Susan Daley, "Guatemalan Women's Claims Put Focus on Canadian Firms' Conduct Abroad," *The New York Times*, April 2, 2006, accessed July 20, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/03/world/americas/guatemalan-womens-claims-put-focus-on-canadian-firms-conduct-abroad.html? r=0.
- 17. "One of the key points was seeing this woman not as a victim but as a survivor within an oppressive social system. And to reflect how we as viewers have a social responsibility for this. Each action we take in our everyday lives, such as consuming pornography or continuing to reproduce gender stereotypes, automatically involves us in this issue." Analola Santana, "El registro de la memoria: una entrevista con Violeta Luna, Rocío Solís y Mariana González Roberts," *Notas de dirección*, ed. Dora Sales (Cádiz: Asociación Cultural Sorámbulas, 2012), 202.
- 18. Wendy Brown, "Wounded Attachments," *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (1993): 399.
- 19. "We all agreed that we did not want to present specific cases, which we all know are horrific stories for the most part. Rather, we wanted to create an understanding that all these women are not simply victims who have no history, which is the same thing that happens to immigrants outside their country, we become 'immigrants' only, while before we were someone who had a life, a history and a great number of details. Now suddenly you're part of a collective. That is, now you're an immigrant, you are now a victim of violence, now you are a victim of trafficking." Santana, "El registro de la memoria," 215.
- 20. Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon, *Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.
- 21. "We acknowledge the complexity of the human being, who is capable of generating such horror and is also able to generate beauty and humor," Santana, "El registro de la memoria," 216.
- 22. Lydia Cacho, *Esclavas del poder, un viaje al corazón e la trata sexual de mujeres y niñas en el mundo* (México: Editorial Grijalbo, 2010), 170. **2**
- 23. Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003), 36.
- 24. Diéguez, "Communitas of Pain," forthcoming.

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Death on the US-Mexico Border: Performance, Immigration Politics, and José Casas's 14

Jimmy A Noriega

ABSTRACT Jimmy Noriega looks to theatrical performance as a method for engaging the subject of "illegal" immigration and, in particular, the death of undocumented migrants. He argues that theatre can provide an avenue by which to generate both a private and public discourse that allows for a more nuanced and fair treatment of migrant death, which is especially significant in comparison to the representations offered by the typical media coverage. Rather than focus on several texts, this essay analyzes one play—14 by José Casas (2003)—and the ways it engages with mass migrant death and the myriad of responses to it.

"14 Illegal Immigrants Found Dead in Arizona"-CNN1

"14 Illegal Immigrants Die in Desert" - The Washington Post2

As the two news articles above detail, on May 24, 2001, the bodies of fourteen undocumented immigrants were found near Yuma, Arizona, five days after their smugglers abandoned them. In addition, eleven survivors were hospitalized for dehydration and illness brought on by the severe desert heat, which reached temperatures as high as 115 degrees. *The Washington Post* reports, "The 14 immigrants who succumbed to exposure made up the largest group of border crossers to die in Arizona in more than 20 years." The death of these fourteen individuals garnered widespread media attention and renewed the national dispute over immigration. The reactions to the deaths varied from sympathy for the immigrants to anger at the increasing number of undocumented people entering the US through the Mexican border. Though migrant death is common in this region, the news of mass death triggered a more robust response from both sides of the debate.

As expected, the news headlines reported the event as a grave incident of abuse and violence inflicted onto immigrant bodies. However, the subtle yet more significant detail of these stories is that the subjects of the news reports remained nameless: the facts, told as tragedy, still managed to erase the individuals from the story. Throughout the media accounts, the words "aliens," "illegals," and "bodies" were used to describe the people involved in the mass death, yet at no time was a single person named or identified. Collapsed into generalized and indistinguishable categories, these individuals were framed only as corpses, stripped of a human identity and re-signified as statistics. In this way, migrant death becomes unrecognizable—in fact, *alien* and *other*—to the consumers of US news agencies. Reduced to numbers, the bodies of Latin Americans who die crossing the border into the US have become increasingly commodified and normalized in the international crisis of undocumented immigration in the fifteen years since these events.

In this essay, I am interested in performances that tackle the subject of "illegal" immigration and, in particular, the death of undocumented migrants. It is my claim that the theatre of immigration needs to be interpreted within the larger framework of protest/activism that seeks justice for those who exist outside the US legal system. Performance can work to (re)present the deaths of migrants but, more importantly, it can shed light onto the public reactions to these tragedies. In this way, theatre also becomes a site of self-reflexivity, asking audience members to critically examine their own opinions and biases as they witness these stories unfold. It is the spectators' ability to watch characters perform a multivocal response to the immigration debate that remains essential to the efficacy of theatre for social change within this context. For this reason, I argue that theatre can provide an avenue by which to generate both a private and public discourse that allows for a more nuanced and fair treatment of migrant death, which is especially significant in comparison to the representations offered by the typical media coverage. Theatre, therefore, makes a contribution to leveraging justice against the largescale cyclical crisis of migrant death, which is fueled by the forces of immigration politics, labor, capital, racism, and national borders (to name a few).

In Performance, Identity, and Immigration Law: A Theatre of Undocumentedness, Gad Guterman offers a distinct perspective into the ways that theatrical plays about immigration work within and against the US legal structure. He offers the term "undocumentedness" as way of reframing the conversation on illegal immigration. He says, "Undocumentedness moves us away from an adjective that dangerously describes people to a noun that describes circumstances under which people must live. These circumstances often create specific stresses and contradictions that inevitably shape an individual's sense of self and community." This strategy rejects those traditionally accepted markers ("undocumented," "illegal") that perpetuate a power dynamic grounded in marginalization and exploitation of the immigrant body. As useful as it is, however, undocumentedness cannot be employed as a lens to restructure our understanding of those who die in the act of crossing; the term cannot apply to migrant death precisely because it focuses attention on the social and legal structures that affect people in everyday life. Death, as a marker, erases the immigrant from the living world and, in a similar vein to news headlines and statistics, does not allow for agency in the way the deceased are portrayed or remembered. In fact-precisely because nothing can be done to reverse death—justice for migrants who die as they cross into the US is a complete impossibility within this failed system. We can alter the conditions that cause migrant death, but the beneficiaries of that reform belong to the future; the possibility for progressive change only applies to those who are alive. The limits of migrant death (and how we react to it) are premised on the fact that we cannot speak about the dead without implicating or invoking the living.

It seems, then, that there is an inherent failure in the ability of activism to intercede on behalf of those who are affected by the gravest of injustices—death. So how can theatre work to portray the stories of dead immigrants while operating within this limited system of social change? And how can performance attempt to secure justice for those who have already perished under unjust circumstances? First, we must admit the failure of these performances to rectify or reverse the injustice at hand. Only then can we begin to understand the role that the deceased play in the larger framework of activism and political reorganization. Next, we must accept that the living use and manipulate the bodies of the dead in their agendas for and against social change. In many ways, the drive to stop death emerges from and finds its power in death itself.

With this in mind, I contend that theatre can work in dialogue with activists seeking reform as a way of *preventing* further violence and death, while at the same time

acknowledging that these public performances readily use victimhood and the bodies/stories of the dead as a way of instigating a call to action. The theatre of migrant death is similar to what Robert Skloot calls "the theatre of genocide." Both portray mass death on stage in an effort to reinsert the deceased into public memory, as well as to educate audiences in an attempt to prevent future loss. Skloot says,

The theatre in particular possesses the capacity to assist in raising awareness of the scourge of genocide and in engaging emotional responses that can both offer images that provoke empathy for people whose lives are vulnerable and endangered and bring audiences closer to understanding the historical and cultural forces that create the lethal condition for mass murder. 6

Similarly, a number of US theatre artists have responded to migrant death by creating plays that ask their audiences to identify with immigrant subjects and to witness representations of and responses to their deaths. This is especially important because immigrant death is too easily forgotten, ignored, and/or erased in the national consciousness. Performance, even though temporary, claims a public space for the invisible and deceased. It also, however, remains implicated in the political economy of representation and identity politics. Even more so, the theatre of immigration looks different depending on the positionality of the author: Mexican plays treat the subject very differently than those written in the US, just as US Latina/o playwrights create very different interpretations than their non-Latina/o counterparts.

With these differences in mind, rather than focus on several texts, this essay analyzes one play—14 by José Casas (2003)—and the ways it engages with mass migrant death and the myriad of responses to it. Casas, who has won several awards for his writing, is a self-identified Chicano playwright, and his work has been staged across the Southwest. In his book *Ethnodrama: An Anthology of Reality Theatre*, Johnny Saldaña calls Casas, "one of the nation's most exciting new Latino voices in theatre." Casas based the play on interviews he conducted with different people around Arizona, including residents of Yuma, Phoenix, Flagstaff, Sedona, Guadalupe, Chandler, Goodyear, Scottsdale, Douglas, Tucson, Tempe, and Mesa. Teatro Bravo in Phoenix first staged 14 in September 2003. It later became a 2004 finalist for the Nuestras Voces National Playwriting Competition and has since had more than twenty productions in a number of venues, including: East LA Rep, Hillbarn Theatre, Gilbert-Chandler Community College, and Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble.

The play is comprised of a series of monologues, framed as interviews with Casas as character, that take as a departure point the passing of the fourteen immigrants in Yuma. Casas chose not to create characters for the deceased, but instead to allow the topic of their deaths to be the impetus for the play's storyline. 14 opens with a series of projections that read:

may 19, 2001
a smuggling guide abandons more
than 30 mexicans crossing
east of yuma.
dehydration kills 14.
their deaths trigger renewed
binational debate over immigration.

the dead are:

lorenzo hernandez ortiz

raymundo barreda landa,

reynaldo bartolo,

ario castillo fernandez,

enrique landero,

raymundo barreda maruri,

julian mabros malaga,

claudio marin alejandro,

arnulfo flores badilla,

edgar adrian martinez colorado,

efrain gonzalez manzano,

heriberto tapia baldillo.

two others have yet

to be identified⁹

The first projections, reminiscent of the news headlines announcing deaths of undocumented immigrants, focus on the facts. Individual slides with each of the victims' names, however, follow. The slides, projected onto the dark stage and with pauses between each, allow the audience time to absorb and react to the list of names, something rarely provided in the news stories. This use of individual names departs from the scenario of immigrant deaths as nameless tragedy. Rather, each slide recasts the deceased bodies from group to individual, invisible to visible. Even the final slide, listing two unidentified individuals, allows the victims a moment and space within the public sphere.

After this somber opening, which functions as both a pedagogical moment and a form of memorialization, the actors enter onto the stage. Throughout the production, four performers portray the polyvocal responses from the interviewees: a rancher, artist, senator, cashier, actor, magazine editor, law student, nanny, ER doctor, soldier, kindergarten teacher, pastor, and immigrant day laborer. These "characters" are based on the real-life interviews conducted by the playwright. As Casas explains, "Every scene is based/fictionalized on actual interviews and the people that I interviewed. In terms of the dialogue, I would say that 75% of it was the actual interviews being incorporated into the text." 10 Through this approach, Casas was able to craft a documentary-like portrayal of the inhabitants of the borderlands. Their living voices stand in stark contrast to the bodiless names that could only be presented through written form at the beginning of the play. In this way, the living and the dead are separated not just in life, but also in staged representation.

14 builds upon this difference as it presents a number of individuals who live in the contested and complicated border zone. In the groundbreaking *Borderlands/La Frontera:* The New Mestizaje, Gloria Anzaldúa draws attention to the many nameless and faceless people who have been caught up in the violence of the US-Mexico border, what she calls "una herida abierta" (an open wound). 11 According to Anzaldúa, the pain brought upon the inhabitants of the borderlands is caused by division and separation: "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them....The

prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants." ¹² For Anzaldúa, the demarcation of the border exists as a way of protecting the gringos ¹³ from those she refers to as "*los atravesados*." ¹⁴ Understood from the US perspective, the border becomes the physical barrier between the "first world" and the "other" nations of Latin America. This us/them dichotomy ("us" being the North/US, "them" being the South/Latin America) transforms those who attempt to cross the border regions of Mexico into the US into others and aliens, people *not like us*. These constructions strip the individual of identity and humanity: no longer a subject, the immigrant body in the act of crossing becomes an object of contestation, fear, and disgust.

Throughout the play, 14 captures these glaring differences, presenting a regional identity that is fractured and divided not just by citizenship, but also by race. The characters must make a conscious decision to identify with or separate themselves from the dead migrants, which provides the audience with an even more complicated perspective into the immigration debate. Even more so, the characters in the play are both Latina/o and non-Latina/o. Adding to this distinction is the playwright's requirement that the casting must include: "one white actress, one latina, one white actor, one latino." 15 The physical requirement of racial difference onstage demands that the audience acknowledge and reflect upon the actors' bodies and race throughout the production. But as Casas demonstrates throughout 14, the opinions and reactions of the characters to the issues of race and undocumented immigration are not always aligned with the color of their skin. Some Latina/o characters, like Omar Castillo and Matthew Logan, do not affiliate themselves with the immigrants, even though many would expect them to because of their shared ethnic identities. Instead, these characters go out of their way to separate themselves entirely from the immigrants, as well as to demonstrate their assimilation into the US cultural system as evidence of their superiority. As a result, the interviews about migrant death instead become about personal identity and self-promotion.

The character Castillo, an Arizona State Senator, uses his moment on stage as a way of justifying his position against bilingual education. His statements reflect the misconception that immigrants take advantage of social service programs and welfare, and that their presence in the state is an economic burden on the taxpayers. In his monologue he argues that it is not the responsibility of the education system to carry the burden of the immigrant children who attend Arizona's schools. "[T]he Hispanic community needs to rely less on the kindness of others" is his assessment of the situation in Arizona. 46 When accused of being anti-Latina/o, he responds, "i'm anything, but that." 17 He then continues to justify his political position by telling his own personal story: the son of a Latina housekeeper, he used to accompany his mother to work as a child. He attributes his mastery of the English language to the fact that he used to watch television as his mother worked. In this way, he distances himself from any possible connection to the lives or deaths of immigrant people, instead focusing on his own story of personal success.



Juan Enrique Carrillo as Omar Castillo in the Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble production of 14 (March 2008). Photo credit: Karyn Lawrence.

The other character in the play who distances himself from his Latino identity is Matthew Logan. A native of Phoenix, Logan makes a living as an actor in Los Angeles. When asked about his decision to change his name from Mateo Sanchez to Matthew Logan, he responds, "same difference? it's only a name; not who i am." 18 For him, the choice to discard his Latino identity for a more generic and malleable one is easy. But this troubles Casas, who up until this point has remained neutral. Throughout the play, the person being interviewed is speaking to Casas, who does not talk but still maintains a presence. In the scene with Logan, Casas's position as interviewer/playwright takes on a more substantial role as Logan responds to interjections by the playwright. Logan retorts, "my cousin warned me about you. she told me you were one of those chicano power militant types." 19 Logan, as a Latino defending his choice to assimilate, objects to Casas by asserting, "i don't see any reason to feel guilty. why should i? i didn't grow up with visions of becoming a revolutionary. all i ever wanted to do was act. it's that simple. the way i go about accomplishing this....is my business." 20

Logan stands up to Casas as he defends his actions as a political choice, claiming that, "i do shakespeare because it challenges me. chekov. ibsen. i love them and i don't want anyone to tell me i can't do those plays because of my ethnicity." For Logan, the choice not to be Latino in the theatre business is what allows him the opportunity to continue to do what he loves. Casas, a playwright and fellow theatre practitioner, however, has dedicated his work to the Chicana/o cause. Faced with a "white-washed" counterpart, Casas is challenged from within his own affinity group (not only ethnically, but also artistically).

Logan, responding to a question from Casas, says, "luis valdez? ooh, how did i not see that coming? no…i've never done any of his work…sorry to disappoint you, but i can't say it bothers me very much either." This meeting of the two sides of the politically/artistically informed male Latino identity spectrum—the militant Chicano and the assimilated Latino—ends in a draw and the interview scene concludes.

The mention of Luis Valdez in the play, although dismissed by Logan, reminds the audience that 14 comes from a tradition that, as Jorge Huerta notes, "was born of and remains a people's theater." 23 Casas's identification with Valdez situates him within a genealogy that developed from the politically charged actos of El Teatro Campesino. For Casas and Valdez, Chicano theatre is revolutionary theatre: its primary goal is to stage the voices, stories, and struggles of its people. And as Huerta reminds us, "If the politically active Chicano is the hero, the apolitical Mexican American is the villain." 24 Within the plays of Valdez, this antihero/villain was represented by the vendido (the sellout). Betraying his culture and people in the name of self-interest, the vendido is one of the most dangerous figures in the Latina/o fight for justice. In 14, both Castillo and Logan embody this dangerous traitor: they offer an anti-immigrant and anti-Latina/o perspective that threatens the community from the inside. And when it comes to migrant suffering and death, this apathetic and even hostile reaction exacerbates the problem. For many, the question that emerges is: why should anyone care about migrant deaths if not even Latina/os care about them?

The opinions of the non-Latina/o characters in the play also offer a variety of perspectives. Although race seems to be the obvious factor determining the attitudes of those being interviewed, most of the non-Latina/o citizens do not see race as a central concern. For example, Lacey Williams, a white local businesswoman from Scottsdale, says, "it isn't a question of race. it's a question of economics. arizona is already in a budget crunch as it is. add them. yes, that's right. them! the immigrants you were talking about. add them to the equation and you'll see that the solution to the problem is nowhere in sight." 25 Employing the us/them divide in her language and reasoning, Williams continues to justify her views on immigration as a matter of economic security and comfort. Defining Scottsdale as "a community of like-minded people," Williams corrects herself by asserting, "we want our property values to remain high. we want our children to attend the best schools [...] we don't want what's happening to places like tucson and yuma to happen here. that wouldn't be acceptable." 26 For Williams, the importance of class superiority overwhelms the possibility of migrant justice. She lists the luxuries in her town—expensive hotels, restaurants, spas, golf courses—and is quick to reassure the audience that she is not racist:

this isn't about me disliking mexicans or anything like that. i love the mexican culture. i practically live at baja fresh. ²⁷ and...my nanny, rosa, is like a member of the family...and when i was a student at arizona state, my sorority sisters and i spent every spring break in mexico...my husband and i went there for our honeymoon so, you see, it's not about disliking another group of people. it's about the fact that there is not enough money to go around. ²⁸

In her explanation, she reduces Mexican culture and its people to a restaurant, nanny, and vacations in Mexico, demonstrating that she is unable to comprehend the larger framework of economic disadvantage and racism. She then indicates and expresses concern that the needs of her community are being neglected because of immigrants: "is it wrong to believe our citizens should have the first right to the amenities entitled to us as taxpayers? education, social services, etc. is it fair that some foreigner has access to our resources?" Although studies have shown that immigrants are less likely than native-

born citizens to use public services, Williams maintains that the immigrant is at fault for the economic decline of the state. $\frac{30}{2}$



Elsa Martinez Phillips as Lacey Williams in the Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble production of 14 (March 2008). Photo credit: Karyn Lawrence.

These kinds of misconceptions, fueled by anti-immigrant rhetoric, become the basis for much of the animosity toward the immigrant and allow for a dehumanization of migrant death. Even though many citizens and politicians claim to act on behalf of immigrants, the legal and social structures at play prevent any significant changes from taking effect. As this monologue demonstrates, it is belonging and exclusion that become central to any discussion of immigration. Even in death, which one would assume should produce some form of sympathy, the migrants cannot escape the limits of an exclusionary discourse based on hatred and disdain for otherness. As a nation, the foci of these types of tragedies quickly turn into debates on border security, citizenship, and economic and social identity. These words and actions emerge from a desire to define and control foreign bodies through a pathologization steeped in concepts of transgression and illegality. In the end, blame is always placed onto the immigrants.

When Williams turns the conversation to the weather, she claims that it helps make Scottsdale the perfect place to live. She says, "i can't say i have an answer for the heat, but that's what air conditioners and pools were made for and, really...a little heat never hurt anybody." 31 But when Casas interjects, bringing the conversation back to the death of the immigrants in the desert, she answers, "yes, yes, the fourteen immigrants. simple. they should've brought along some more water." 32 Incredibly, Williams blames the immigrants for their own demise, simplifying the issue and exhibiting not only ignorance, but a lack of

sorrow for their death. Reacting to the interviewer's fury as he writes in his notebook, Williams is offended and says, "unlike you, i try to look at people as people...and, not race. nothing i've told you today has anything to do with that. it's about maintaining standards. there's no sin in that." 33

This need to protect "standards" and property becomes the main justification for those who oppose immigration reform. In a scene entitled "a man's home," Casas interviews Charlie Clarkson, a rancher from Douglas who is the leader of a group known as Voices for a Free Arizona, a consortium of ranchers who actively combat immigration along the border zone. In addition to the many natural dangers that they face as they cross the desert, migrants also face vigilantism which this group represents. With the continued attention of border-patrolling white supremacist groups like the Minutemen, the Ku Klux Klan, and other militia organizations, undocumented immigrants go from hunting out a better living in the United States to actually being the hunted. With this type of Anglonativism on the rise, new breeds of US citizens are being generated and dispersed along the borderlands: armed with patriotism, the security of citizenship, and Second Amendment gun rights, these volunteers patrol the desert in search of immigrants. Similar in style to what Ghassan Hage calls the "white-and-very-worried-about-the-nationsubject," these vigilantes act according to a "White nation fantasy." 34 Hage defines this as, "a fantasy of a nation governed by White people, a fantasy of White supremacy." 35 The immigrants, or more specifically the racialized immigrant bodies, represent the threat to this fantasy. In his scenario, Hage presents a society governed by a "nationalist practice of exclusion,"36 where non-Anglos become "objects to be governed."37

This governing takes on many forms, but most important to this essay is the fact that the US government has been able to militarize the US-Mexico border through armed force with a doctrine that Timothy Dunn calls "low intensity conflict." Dunn includes in this description: "military surveillance equipped by police agencies," including AHIS Cobra helicopter gunships, OC-85Cs reconnaissance helicopters, small airplanes with TV cameras and forward-looking infrared night-vision sensors, and a variety of seismic, magnetic, and acoustic sensors to detect movement, heat, and sound, all in addition to the chain link and industrial fencing set up along the border. This militarization—in other words, a war on undocumented immigrants—advocates for a greater us/them divide. We belong here and they do not.

In an atmosphere of militarization, where the only goal is to stop border crossings, the death of individuals becomes nothing more than collateral damage. Another character in 14, Clarkson, plays with a small airplane drone as he explains the need for a military approach to undocumented immigration. He says, "we need all the help we can get. times are changing, america is under siege, the world isn't a safe place anymore." $\frac{40}{10}$ He continues, "if we don't protect ourselves, no one else will." 41 As the interview continues, and as Casas brings up the subject of the fourteen deceased immigrants, Clarkson responds, "it's a shame what happened to those people. but, those are the chances you take, you know?"42 As he continues to speak about immigrants, he shows a brief moment of understanding, stating: "of course, i know why they come! i know they got families like me... that they want to make a living. feed their children." 43 But even this moment of clarity becomes obscured as he adds, "but who's to say that one of the people crossing isn't one of those drug dealers or terrorist fellas." 44 As able as he is to cognitively understand the reasons that immigrants cross illegally into the US, he is unable to empathize with them and instead bases his opinions on a fear-based rhetoric that labels immigrants as potential drug dealers and terrorists. This "othering" effect allows him to maintain a distance that prevents a humane perspective into the immigrant plight.

In the play, the Reverend Clay Nash stands in clear juxtaposition to Clarkson. In an interview that takes place in the desert outskirts of Tucson, just two hours north of the Mexican border, Nash explains why the immigrants are risking their lives to cross the dangerous desert: "immigration is changing their policies; rerouting immigrants so that they have to travel the most treacherous geography you can imagine...now these poor folk are being forced to travel to god knows where...only to die...not to be apprehended, the powers that be know that all too well." 45 When Operation Gatekeeper and Operation Blockade went into effect in the 1990s, the U.S. government's goal was to stop illegal immigration coming in from the large urban centers of El Paso/Ciudad Juárez and San Diego/Tijuana. 46 The results were successful, with a reduction in the numbers of undocumented immigrants crossing into the US via these entry points. However, there was a "funnel effect" that resulted in a change of migratory patterns that made the Arizona desert the alternate route for entry North. 47 As traditional, less dangerous entry points were sealed, immigrants had to find alternate routes that were often more dangerous and carried a greater risk of death. A February 2010 Los Angeles Times article states, "some 6,000 people have died crossing the Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California borders with Mexico since 1994, according to human-rights groups. About 500 more die every year." 48

Reverend Nash, during his interview with Casas, is filling up a water station for use by immigrants. Nash's activities, as well as those of other human rights groups, are under attack by many US citizens. As he explains:

what irritates me are those people who criticize what we're doing...saying that we are not only contributing, but encouraging illegal immigration...and i use the word, illegal, loosely. that word should be reserved for those who are truly breaking the law...rapists...murderers...that isn't the case here. the only thing these people are about is survival.

Reflecting on the death of the Yuma fourteen, he continues, "it boggles my mind to see how desensitized civilization has become...the sight of fourteen deceased bodies on a dried up riverbed and the only thoughts that pass through their hollow mind is 'we got to do something about illegal immigration. it's getting out of hand." 50 Nash's words, as the final monologue in the play, stand against those spoken by Lacey Williams and Charlie Clarkson. Nash's view of the crisis, truly seeing the deaths of the fourteen individuals as a tragedy, forces him to reflect on the humanitarian concerns of the immigration crisis. As citizens of Arizona rally against undocumented immigrants and as legislation passes that puts civil liberties in jeopardy, the simple answer offered by Nash is to see and focus on the human aspect of these immigrant deaths. In an educated and almost prophetic way, Nash offers a solution—or better yet, a new perspective—to the dispute over illegal immigration. He says, "we can no longer look at ourselves as two nations divided by a river or some fence. We have to look at ourselves as a region that's going to live together, that's going to work together, that's going to make some damn progress together." 51 Invoking Anzaldúa's image and metaphor of the "gran herida," Nash identifies with the plight of those who are caught in the violence of the borderlands. As his scene comes to an end, Nash sees an immigrant and calls to him to offer some water—because of Nash this person does not become another faceless victim of the desert.



Daniel Penilla as Reverend Clay Nash in the Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble production of 14 (March 2008). Photo credit: Karyn Lawrence.

As Nash well understands, for the thousands of Latin American immigrants entering the US illegally each year, this act of transfer and transformation—the crossing over—is a dangerous and deadly one. Fearing being trapped, arrested, and deported by US officials, these border crossers traverse the dangerous space of the border in search of better opportunities: the mythic American Dream. In the penultimate scene, an immigrant day laborer, Oscar García, offers the immigrant perspective on this journey and the risks involved in it. He speaks to Casas while looking for work in front of a Home Depot in Mesa. The monologue, entitled "muñeca," is delivered in Spanish. García begins by telling Casas that he knew one of the fourteen victims that died in Yuma. He says, "there's always a chance we won't make it. that shit is fucked-up, but there is no other way. mexico is a poor country, like its people." Having previously taken the journey, García acknowledges that the immigrants face the dangers knowingly. His insistence that "there is no other way" only highlights the necessity and desperation of the immigrants and explains why so many still cross when they know they can die.

García continues by speaking about his family in Mexico and the way that his money is helping them out. He explains that he wants to buy his daughter, Estrella, "a real christmas present and a real birthday present…one of those american barbie dolls." 54 Calculating that the dolls, a doll house, and paying for shipping will cost him almost two hundred dollars, he shows determination to provide his daughter with the gifts, which ironically are a symbol of the American white and upper-class community. As the embodiment of the immigrant voice in the play, García tells Casas, "i work hard." 55 Understanding his

interviewer's ability to speak on his behalf, he takes a moment to address the immigration debate and the opinions of those who mislabel and mistreat him and his fellow immigrants:

i don't steal or nothing like that. i am an honest man. it's not fair what people say about me and my friends. they treat us like we're animals and that's not true! they do not know how we feel...how much we miss our families. i love mexico, but there are no jobs in mexico. i am only doing what i have to do. i'm not hurting anybody. you make sure to tell people that. we are not criminals! criminals don't buy american barbie dolls. 56

Challenging the dominant anti-immigrant rhetoric, García's monologue is the third, usually silenced, voice in the immigration debate. Opponents and supporters of immigrants—as citizens—get a voice in the media and in elections, but the undocumented immigrant voice is almost always ignored. Anti-immigrant citizens use the live body of undocumented immigrants in the US as evidence of a threat; pro-immigrant citizens use the dead body of the immigrant as evidence of a growing humanitarian disaster. In 14, Casas allows the immigrant voice to be heard, in his/her native tongue, and for the immigrant body to be seen on his/her own terms and without a filter. In addition to García's monologue, 14 provides the audience with another Spanish monologue, "virgencita linda," delivered by an elderly woman, Luz Ortiz, who works as a hotel cleaning lady. By providing the immigrant voice from differing gendered and generational points of view, Casas presents a wider view of the immigrant perspective. It is important to note once again, however, that these responses can only come from the living; in death, migrants are marked by an erasure that prevents any form of agential public outcry.



April Ibarra performs the monologue "virgencita linda" in the Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble production of 14 (March 2008). Photo credit: Karyn Lawrence.

Despite the efforts of playwrights such as Casas, the truth remains that no real justice can be offered to migrants who die as they trek the dangerous border zone into the United States in search of a better home and life. Very little can be done to prosecute or even prevent these types of crimes, especially when undocumented immigration negatively marks migrants as criminals. Theatre, nonetheless, provides counternarratives to the immigration debate by offering new perspectives on how to engage with death and migration. As David Román says, "Performances open up new critical possibilities for thinking about migration and exile, citizenship and belonging, and the cost for those who

traverse those borders and boundaries." ⁵⁷ In this way, theatre can be employed as one of the many efforts designed to help solve some of the problems caused by this debate over immigration and to prevent future injustices from taking place.

The playwrights physically recreating these stories on the stage are reminding audiences that the undocumented immigrant is alive and human, even when it is death that creates and propels the narrative. Theatre, as a form dependent on live bodies (both on the stage and in the audience), becomes a creative avenue through which to discuss death precisely because it is a live event. The audience, in turn, reciprocates through an active sense of "seeing"—in this case, that which is rendered invisible in the acts of crossing and dying. As Casas states, "Exploring the issue of immigration on stage is vital because it is another important entry point for dialogue as well as a space where different perspectives can be explored." He continues, "Exploring death allows for a variety of stories, as well as creates a space for audience members to reflect on what it means to be human." 58

Traditional theatre, like protest, can foster the conditions that work toward a progressive immigrant agenda: a public platform, energized performing bodies, an engaged audience, and a sense of communitas. Victor Turner, writing about communitas, describes it as an experience of unity that brings people together, but also "preserves individual distinctiveness." The sense of communitas engendered in performances dealing with the subject of immigration allows for people publicly marked as different to find a common ground, even if only momentarily. And as Jill Dolan notes in *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*, it is moments of shared intimacy that contain the potential to produce feelings of belonging and a sense of future hope. Commenting on the political potential created by audiences coming together, she notes that "such spectatorship might encourage them to be active in other public spheres, to participate in civic conversations that performance perhaps begins." It is moments like these that can lead to the much-needed change in the failed immigration system.

Theatre is a political arena where new dialogues can be scripted, imagined, and transferred to new audiences; it is a temporary yet vital space that is needed in this age of increased migration and death. By allowing people previously rendered invisible to become nationally—perhaps even internationally—visible, performance transforms the public into a space where seemingly ordinary citizens and actors can witness and speak out against social injustice. The potential of the theatre of immigration lies in its ability to work in tandem with those activists seeking reorganization as a way of preventing violence and death along the borderlands. While the debates surrounding the country—national identity, national borders, national security—continue to escalate, we must remember that it is migrant death that creates the impetus for a larger dialogue on legal, and humane, reform.

Notes

- 1. No author, "14 Illegal Immigrants Found Dead in Arizona," *CNN*, May 24, 2001, accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/05/24/border.deaths/.
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- 5. Robert Skloot, *The Theatre of Genocide: Four Plays about Mass Murder in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Armenia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 5.
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- 7. A few examples include: Carlos Lacamara, *Nowhere on the Border*, in *Plays and Playwrights 2009*, ed. Martin Denton (New York: The New York Theatre Experience, 2009), 231–260; Kara Hartzler, *No Roosters in the Desert* (South Gate, CA: NoPassport Press, 2010); Mary Gallagher, ¿De Donde? (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1998); Silvia González S., *Boxcar/El Vagón*, in *Borders on Stage: Plays Produced by Teatro Bravo*, ed. Trino Sandoval (Phoenix: Lion & The Seagoat, 2008), 38–68.
- 8. Johnny Saldaña *Ethnodrama: An Anthology of Reality Theatre* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2005), 46.
- 9. José Casas, 14, in Borders on Stage: Plays Produced by Teatro Bravo, ed. Trino Sandoval (Phoenix: Lion & The Seagoat, 2008), 77.
- 10. José Casas, personal communication with the author, March 15, 2016.
- 11. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestizaje*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books), 25.
- 12. Ibid. 🔁
- 13. This is a Spanish term that is often meant to refer to a person, especially a US citizen, who is not Hispanic or Latina/o.
- 14. "Atravesados" can have two meanings. Literally, it can be translated as "the crossed."

 But the negative connotation of the word, when used to refer to people, can also mean "those in the way."
- 15. Casas, 14, 74. 🔁
- 16. Ibid., 82.
- 17. Ibid. Casas does not use capital letters throughout the script. This is a stylistic trademark of his playwriting.
- 18. Ibid., 92. 🔁
- 19. Ibid., 91. 🔁
- 20. Ibid., 92. 🔁
- 21. Ibid., 93. 🔁
- 22. Ibid. 🔁
- 23. Jorge A. Huerta, *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms*, (Ypsilanti, MI: Bilingual Press, 1982), 3. 2
- 24. Ibid., 47.
- 25. Casas, "14," 111. 2
- 26. Ibid., 112.
- 27. Baja Fresh is a chain of Tex-Mex restaurants.
- 28. Ibid. 🔁
- 29. Ibid. 🔁
- 30. La Voz Nueva, "Immigration Misconceptions," *La Voz Nueva* (Denver, CO), Aug 10, 2005.
- 31. Casas, "14," 113. 🔁
- 32. Ibid. 🔁
- 33. Ibid., 114. 🔁

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49. Casas, "14," 120. 🔁
50. Ibid. 🔁
51. Ibid. 🔁
52. Casas provides a translation of the two Spanish monologues with the script "as a
   courtesy," but he emphasizes that "those pieces must be performed in spanish."
   Casas, 14, 75, emphasis in original.
53. Ibid., 125.
54. Ibid., 127. 2
55. Ibid., 128.
56. Ibid. 🔁
57. David Román, Performance in America: Contemporary U.S. Culture and the
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58. Casas, personal communication.
59. Victor Turner, From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play (New York:
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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Touring Testimonies: Rebalancing the Public Realm through Human Rights Activism in *Asylum Monologues* and *Seven*

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ABSTRACT In the contemporary globalized world, the life stories of marginalized and vulnerable peoples play a crucial role in attempting to leverage justice. Charities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other bodies concerned to "raise the voices" of asylum seekers, displaced peoples, and victims of abuse flood the internet and other media with written and filmed testimonies in [...]

In the contemporary globalized world, the life stories of marginalized and vulnerable peoples play a crucial role in attempting to leverage justice. Charities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other bodies concerned to "raise the voices" of asylum seekers, displaced peoples, and victims of abuse flood the internet and other media with written and filmed testimonies in attempts to build public awareness of their plights and support for their cases. Conversely, these voices and those who seek to advocate for them can be swiftly dismissed or fiercely derided. Often, the telling of their stories represents an opportunity to those whose fate is partly determined by the way that their lives are perceived by others to rebalance how their actions and motivations are presented. Their testimonies can help to combat the "demeaning or contemptible" picture that leads to the "misrecognition" (emphasis original) identified in the 1990s by Charles Taylor as a form of "oppression" of minority groups. 1 Crucially, the practice can affect the decisions taken whether or not to grant access to legal and civic rights. In the context of live performance, as Harry Derbyshire and Loveday Hodson argue of verbatim forms, testimonies can exert affective pressures on their witnesses, triggering recognition that might influence the acceptance or rejection of a person's claims.²

This article is focused on the performance of testimony, and the intersections of this mode of conveying life experience with established narratives and existing discourses that influence the degree and quality of recognition individuals receive as humans. As well as acknowledging their affective influence, it assumes that examining the *mechanics* of making performance from life stories can reveal some of the cultural and economic tensions that underlie the granting of rights upon which a safe and decent life depends. As David Michael Boje and Grace Ann Rosile indicate, storytelling and narrative representation are "powerful ways to trace the forces that push and pull people, organizations and communities." In exploring the way that producers and practitioners attempt to leverage justice through the mechanics of making and telling the stories of vulnerable individuals, I will indicate how the shaping of testimonies by theatre practitioners is sometimes complicit with the globalizing tendencies of Western ideology, and particularly with narratives that tend to emphasize economic potential and a moral sense of deservingness. At the same time, I will illustrate how the ethos and practice of

personal respect that informs the gathering and telling of stories by practitioners challenges new participants and audiences to recognize structural and humanitarian injustices in the contexts within which they work and live.

Specifically, this article will explore the strategies used to make and produce Seven, a multi-authored piece initiated in the USA by playwright Carol K. Mack that interweaves testimonies from seven activist women from around the world. In addition, it will address a series of Asylum Monologues produced by London-based, UK company ice&fire, which tell the life stories of individuals who have been through the UK's asylum system. Looking at the processes whereby practitioners and producers nurture recognition of marginalized people, I argue that their attempts to speak to and with others—rather than for, about or over them—enact and model a humanitarian sense of understanding of and responsibility to others, often within contexts where structural injustices are evident. Their efforts help to establish a public sphere of the kind envisaged by philosopher Hannah Arendt, by making the voices of the silenced and stigmatized present. As Arendt writes in *The Human Condition* (1958), it is through "storytelling" that otherwise privatized and intimate aspects of life are given a sense of reality by bringing them into the realm of what is "seen and heard" by others. 4 I argue that the establishment of such realities through the performance of life stories calls for an adjustment to the individual and collective responsibilities of those who perform and hear them. ⁵ In addition, these testimonies encourage a practice of reflexive self-recognition among people and institutions who have the power to agitate for and ultimately to grant rights and recognition to individuals, as well as to work towards cultural change motivated by the desire to alleviate the oppression of vulnerable peoples.

The Stories of Seven and Asylum Monologues

Seven is composed of interwoven first person accounts of the lives and works to further human rights of seven women in Nigeria, Cambodia, Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Russia, and Pakistan. The play originated in 2007, when playwright Carol K. Mack attended a meeting of Vital Voices Global Partnership (VVGP), a US-based NGO that advances "women's economic, political and social status around the world." The event incited Mack to contact six other US-based female playwrights who formed the female collective, Many Shining Lights. To make Seven, each writer interviewed a woman active in working for social change around the world who was recommended and sponsored by VVGP. With the support of the NGO, Seven premiered in 2008 at the 92nd Street Y Cultural Institution and Community Center in New York. It has since been performed over 150 times in English and in twenty-eight translations across the globe in venues that include the European Union; the Serbian, Ukrainian, and Swedish parliaments; and in many grass root contexts in Europe, South America, Africa, and South Asia. Of these, many productions have been undertaken by Hedda Produktion AB, a Swedish company formed by Mack's longstanding contact Hedda Krausz Sjögren, whose methods frequently combine documentary theatre and advocacy. When produced by Hedda Produktion with the permission of the collective, Seven is presented as Seven on Tour, and is performed as a pared-down rehearsed reading which deploys non-naturalistic casting.

Seven presents the lives and work of seven women who are all, in different ways and in different contexts, actively engaged with and on behalf of other women, to improve access to healthcare, medicine, or workers' rights, or to help find refuges from violence and trafficking. The life-story for example of Afghan doctor Farida Azizi, which inspired the production, relates how she smuggled vital medicine to housebound women under the Taliban regime. Using the testimonial form that Paul Rae argues privileges "a liberal model of the self-contained subject" as part of its rights-claiming practice, the combination of

seven speakers, each with an equally valid story to tell, nevertheless implies a pluralistic and polyphonous outlook based on a bedrock of female solidarity. Utilizing an essential staple of feminist performance, an opening sequence in which each woman steps forward to give her name and nationality, "Hafsat Abiola, Nigeria..." and so on, the play immediately establishes a sense of the equal validity of each self-identifying speaker and her right to recognition in the eyes of witnesses assembled. $\frac{10}{10}$ Woven together through their common themes, the monologues perform a balancing act between individual agency and collective responsibility and action. Empowering practices of self-narration are combined with passages of consciousness-raising, which draw attention to cultural inequalities and the subordination of women: "Some people are high up and some are inferior," comments Mukhtar Mai, an illiterate Pakistani villager whose testimony recounts how tribal elders ordered her gang rape. Mai points to the effect of this cultural injustice on "every girl" in her village who "walks in terror of what happened to me." 11 Northern Irish activist Inez McCormack's testimony about working with women cleaners recalls her realization that people at "the powerless end...the invisible" can be part of a change that comes from "how they see themselves." 12 A sense of agency fueled by a positive self-conception is coupled with calls for an end to exploitative practices, and a calling to account for the gendered structures of male oppression. The testimony of Russian domestic violence worker Marina Pisklakova-Parker tells us that it is necessary not only to rescue or teach drowning kids to swim but to see who is throwing them into the water. $\frac{13}{1}$ In an act of solidarity, the whole cast joins with her in reciting sixteenth century household rules that enforce the patriarchal order: "A man should punish his wife to make her more obedient." 14

In telling these life stories, Seven avoids the connotations of passivity that have been associated with female victimology in favor of the active, self-motivated approach of the women activists. 15 These are not "victim monologues," but testimonies of female determination, strength, agency, and committed activity, often in the face of great personal danger. In presenting these women's bravery and commitment, the stories expand the boundaries of what heroism is allowed to be, as well as appearing to reverse any sense in which the subaltern female might be "rescued" through the interventions of privilege. In Seven, women appear to rescue themselves and each other, each one experiencing a moment of epiphany which leads her to speak out against inequality and to help others fight it too. At the same time, there is an implicit appeal to the audience in the dramaturgy of the interwoven stories. As with Anna Deveare Smith's Twilight: Los Angeles 1992, according to Alison Forsythe, a "carefully-arranged and hermeneuticallycharged juxtaposition of testimonies" occurs. <u>16</u> An account of the gang rape of Mai, for example, is merged with that of the more privileged Hafsat Abiola, from Nigeria, who receives the dreadful news of her mother's death while Hafsat is studying at Harvard. $\frac{17}{12}$ Such moving but unsettling moments pass without overt comment, leaving the audience to witness the "gap" between the similarities and important differences in the two women's fortunes. The play ends on the sound-effect of a phone that each woman goes to answer, and the comment from Cambodian activist Mu Sochua, that you have to keep working "until people who do not have a voice, do," signaling the women's ongoing commitment. 18 Seven, in many ways, is an inspiration to women and to men—a breathing in of animating air that will incite further venture by its witnesses. Its stories also collectively compose a narrative model, as I explore further below, that suggests a positive and industrious trajectory of female activity.

As with the producers of *Seven*, the London-based theatre company ice&fire uses the testimonial form to tell what it calls "human rights stories." Originally formed around Sonje Linden's play *I Have Before Me a Remarkable Document Given to Me by a Young Lady From Rwanda* (2003), the company has produced a range of projects that support

the creativity of and public awareness about groups such as asylum seekers. It also runs Actors for Human Rights, founded in 2006 as a network of more than 700 professional actors from across the UK who volunteer their time and skills. Tailoring its rehearsed readings by drawing from the portfolio of testimonies it has gathered, and ready to "go anywhere at any time," the network performs *Asylum Monologues* in response to requests from a range of formal and informal organizations around the UK, such as schools, churches, charities, universities, workplaces, and statutory bodies. The company often collaborates with NGOs, including Amnesty International, Save the Children, Refugee Action, and Freedom From Torture, and on occasion has been asked to work with UK government departments. I have attended two versions of these readings, at Kingston Quaker Centre (2015), and at an event held to commemorate the death of Professor Lisa Jardine at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL). I will also refer to a version of *Asylum Monologues* held at the UK Home Office in Leeds (2010).



Members of ice&fire's Actors for Human Rights in performance. Photo credit: ice&fire.

While the narrative of women's survival and enterprise articulated and shaped by Seven can be seen as a strand in a complex weft of competing discourses that effectively seek to "write" women's lives, ice&fire's monologues can be understood to intervene into a fraught narrative field—recently intensified by the so-called "migrant crisis" caused by mass migration to Europe from the Middle East and Africa. Conflicting views expressed assertively by politicians and journalists range from hostile characterizations of migrant peoples as scroungers, criminals, and terrorists, to the obverse but more supportive views of immigrants as upstanding citizens who make great economic and cultural contributions to the UK. In this febrile climate, what Janelle Reinelt calls the "promise" of documentary is certainly alluring. 20 With their origins in the life experiences of suffering and displaced individuals, ice&fire's testimonies offer not only the "absent but acknowledged reality" of documentary forms, but also seem to satisfy a desire for a more profound, human, and intimate sense of the "truth" of migrants' lives. Politically, the performances of the testimonies align themselves with a humanitarian ethos and borderless global citizenship that attempts to counter the principles of territorial sovereignty. In performance, as I will argue below, they work within the practice and spirit of a worldly ethic of care propounded by Ella Myers that is infused by Arendt's notion of amor mundi, in which collaborative and democratic action can align around a shared recognition of reality and understanding of issues and goals. 21 Further, their telling affords and unlocks a "temporary sociality" through the phenomenological aspects of storytelling. 22

At the Kingston Quaker Centre, to an audience largely composed of local volunteers, three actors told the stories of three asylum-seeking activists: Congolese teacher Willy, Cameroonian opposition party member Mary, and the well-educated Ugandan local councilor, Marjorie. At QMUL, Marjorie's story was joined by two others: that of fourteenyear-old Lillian who was sex-trafficked from West Africa to the UK, and of Darfuri boy Adam, who fled to Europe after his parents were killed by the Janjaweed. 23 In the early parts of the testimonies, physical threats were emphasized, the speakers testifying to appalling treatment such as beatings and brutal gang rape. Rather than a moment of epiphany however as in Seven, and an ensuing capacity to self-help and help others, no redemptive turning point emerges from a moment of abuse. Rather, the asylum seekers' personal stories are about their struggles to come to terms with the lack of humane and legal recognition offered by the British authorities. As the testimonies unfolded, audience members learned of a country where "the system is killing people mentally," where mothers with children are traumatized by dawn raids, where detention center Yarl's Wood is a "terrible" place in which people try to "kill themselves," and where a stick-thin new mother is discharged from hospital crying and lonely. 24 "This is England," says one of the actors, in a single and sobering line that challenges notions of Britain as a civilized and civilizing place. 25 Instead, Asylum Monologues establishes a narrative of England (and the UK more generally) as a place where ordinary and/or aspirational decent people are denied not only recognition through the asylum system, but also the capacity for economic and personal agency. At the end of the testimonies there is a continuing sense of appeal, not for money or benefits, but for "protection" and "safety." Having "lost hope," Willy is left in the "limbo" of "a diplomatic form of torture." He effectively lacks a legal status that will enable him to live as a human being, let alone contribute economically and culturally as what might be termed a laborer-citizen. These testimonies require an act of self-recognition that reverses anti-asylum discourse, and exposes the UK's official and legal structures of recognition as morally wanting.

Globalizing Contexts

In negotiating their respective but related discursive fields, the testimonies of both *Asylum Monologues* and *Seven* intervene into wide ranging and complex geopolitical contexts. At pains to avoid running the risk identified by Gayatri Spivak of reducing subaltern women to the status of a "pious item" on a "global laundry list" *Seven* takes care to present women as agents. ²⁷ In so doing however it seems complicit with a narrative that conflates economic potential with moral worth (a tendency also of the narrative that supports migrants on the basis of their economic contribution).

In the online framing of the stories of women by VVGP, including those who were interviewed for *Seven*, the conflation of a narrative of female agency in which the quality of "leadership" is prevalent with the recognition of entrepreneurial and economic activity is especially evident. The VVGP website describes itself as the "preeminent nongovernmental organization that identifies, trains and empowers emerging women leaders and social entrepreneurs around the world." Founded by Hilary Clinton "to promote the advancement of women as a US foreign policy goal," its mission includes being at the "forefront" of coalitions that combat human trafficking and violence against women, and to "equip women with management, business development, marketing, and communications skills." In the presentation of over a hundred women "leaders" on its website, the framing of their life stories by VVGP fades into the highly regularized kinds of presentation and packaging performed by and on behalf of individuals in capitalist labor markets. Clicking on one of the "Featured Voices" links leads to Reyna from Venezuela, pictured in dynamic mode, speaking at a meeting. The caption reads, "Reyna McPeck always wanted to be an entrepreneur," and a few paragraphs of text tell us how after

having six children "her entrepreneurial spirit led her back to school." Another woman, Manal Zraiq, is quoted, "I like to work 24 hours a day. Otherwise I get bored. I don't have slack time." Here perhaps, the website labors on behalf of cultural powers that recognize people's qualities not according to a status that is perceived to be human, but according to economic utility. On every profile page, the women's achievements and successes are catalogued, implying that recognition is conferred through the labors of self-actualization, and the women's capacity for tireless activity. This framing of the stories by VVGP thus comes uncomfortably close to perpetuating a globalized female version of *homo economicus* as defined by philosopher Michel Foucault, playing into a form of "soft" power in line with the neoliberal interests of the USA and other Western powers. Following this thinking, in the practice of female "leadership" women are encouraged to conform to the culture critiqued by political scientist Wendy Brown, where "maximum individual endeavor and interest" is instituted as a practice of governance. Here

Some of the contexts in which Seven has been performed live also suggest negotiations between social and economic structures which emphasize rewards and awards rather than the rights -based system of recognition advocated by humanitarian discourses. When interviewed for a Vital Voices trailer at the opening of the performance directed by Julie Taymor with "Meryl Streep and an all-star cast" at the Hudson Theatre on Broadway, McCormack remarked that she had lived in "narrow," "hostile," and "very unpopular" spaces, but that she "never dreamt that she would end up immortalized in a New York play."32 Her comments suggest that the attention and structures that consolidate the status of privileged individuals in the media-driven entertainment industry might overwhelm the awareness of the feminist and humanitarian activities that the play seeks to raise. Also troubling is the potential for the appropriation of the voices and labor of the female activists to the strategies of the philanthropic activities of large corporations and powerful individuals. The DVF Awards, inaugurated at the 2010 Women in the World Summit, not only grant \$50,000 to recipients to further their work, but confirm the virtue and position of fashion impresario and VVGP board member, Diane von Furstenberg. As Kelly Oliver cautions, pointing to the flaws in the Hegelian master-slave model of recognition, the practice of conferring recognition on others by the dominant group "merely repeats the dynamic of hierarchies, privilege, and domination." 33 The point is well illustrated by Abiola's claim that Seven is an endorsement by "authorized and famous playwrights" from "the most powerful and wealthiest country in the world" that "gives new credibility to our voices...to our identity."34 This seems a long way from the sense of dialogue and collaboration that lies behind the ethos and making of the play, and which the many women—powerful or otherwise—who have been involved in the making of many of its productions have been at pains to stress.

Negotiating Responsibilities Through Practice

Having acknowledged that the framing and staging of these testimonies can reveal broad material pressures of unequal and disciplinary global and economic structures, I want to return now to the humanitarian and strategic impulses that lie behind their constitution in the immediate contexts of their making and their live performances. As in *Seven*, and in common with other verbatim and testimonial pieces produced from interviews, *Asylum Monologues* uses thematic patterning and narrative crafting to shape the material into a whole that is satisfying aesthetically, and which also serves to mobilize the humanitarian impulses of audience members. These pragmatic aims necessitate selective editing of the material. According to current leader of Actors for Human Rights, Charlotte George, on one occasion her fears that the inclusion of comments made by an interviewee could be deemed to be "racist" led her to omit them. 35 It is, of course, possible to see such selectivity as a compromise of the authenticity of the original material and an

intervention too far into the "reality" that the testimony conveys. Yet the careful diplomacy exercised in such cases might also be considered as part of the responsibility taken on by practitioners who must negotiate between a sense of respect for their interviewees, and the presumed needs of audience members. 36 In general, the degree to which the actual words of an interviewee are used is balanced by a politically meaningful determination to treat and represent others with humanity and trust. In some respects this is similar to the flawed but perhaps honorable aspirations of ethnographic research. The approach described by Paula Cizmar, who interviewed Pisklakova-Parker for Seven, for example, seems to coincide with the aim to achieve what Spivak calls the "intimate inhabitation" of the life of another. 37 Cizmar's multiple, thorough, and longitudinal interviews, which were conducted in English in person, by email, and by telephone, aimed to gain a much fuller understanding of her subject's life in Russia (rather than recycle the already existing "sound bite" discourse in the press surrounding the Russian woman's activist project). 38 Notably, such thorough and respectful processes are appreciated in some policy contexts: Don Flynn of NGO Migrants' Rights Network for example emphasizes the importance of "substantial life stories" to the development of effective policies. 39

With ice&fire, interviews will last several hours, and will aim to engage with the interviewee as a "person as a whole" rather than, for example, "a person who has been trafficked."40 Contact will often be maintained with interviewees over several years, a span of time that can reflect the wait that asylum seekers experience as part of the application and appeals process. During this time, as I was told by Christine Bacon, current Artistic Director of ice&fire, interviewees report feeling like "they are nobody, that they don't exist really." 41 Her words echo those of Mary in Asylum Monologues, whose "story" of the dangers of staying in Cameroon was not believed by the UK authorities. 42 In contrast, the ice&fire interview process implements an ethical practice of trust that appears to be absent in the treatment that asylum seekers report receiving, and which research identifies as "hostile" and "interrogatory." 43 These interviews are not only according to Bacon "cathartic" for the interviewees, but are themselves human acts of recognition. Unlike Seven, where the testimonies name and recognize women who are active in public life, ice&fire interviewees, still often undergoing the protracted processes of asylum application, often have their names changed to preserve anonymity (although some who have spoken out before will choose to be named). The giving and performance of their testimonies by these legally and emotionally vulnerable people is not a celebration of individual achievement, but an intervention into a context in which the audibility of marginalized and abject voices is heavily policed and in which the denial of recognition is an inhumane and institutionalized practice.

In the performance of these pieces too, there is a political commitment on behalf of performers and audiences. In discussion, Bacon told me that in her necessarily brief preparations of actors for reading the scripts, she asks them to "sink into the emotion of that moment." This stops short of recommending the Stanislavskian processes that might encourage actors to overlay the script with their own emotional and imaginative interpretation, a tendency that tends to be strongly disavowed by actors rehearsing documentary material. Indeed, Bacon is concerned that actors "honor" the whole person from whom the transcripts emerge. Her instruction challenges actors' reluctance to intervene in the aura of authenticity that is attached to the actual words of another living person, and provokes a deeper sense of the "responsibility towards their subject" that Mary Luckhurst observes is already heightened when actors play real people. Using Bacon's process of "emotional sinking," a humanitarian act of recognition is performed in which actors speak empathetically with rather than over interviewees as they mediate their words to audiences. When performing, Actors for Human Rights

member Helen Clapp explains that she aims to act as a "conduit," discerning and conveying the "emotional footprint" of the original speaker through the transcript. 47 Clapp's commitment was evident on the two occasions I saw her dexterously wielding the skills of her acting training to bring clarity and structure to the transcript she performed. With Marjorie's testimony in her hands, alluding to its origin in the life experience of another human being, Clapp performed not only the words of the asylum seeker, but a rhythmic act of embodiment that might be called "transhuman." Differences such as race, age, background mattered less than the act of recognition of another individual, her words, and her story.

This performative form of recognition can reveal more about the values and labor of the performer and her audience than the original speaker. In this case, the latter is mediated and constituted partly by taking her words from an intimate and personal conversation and making them public—an act which according to verbatim practitioner Robin Soans "confers a responsibility on an audience" and accounts for the "increased intensity" of their listening. 48 During these live performances, a shared sense of connectedness is generated; audience members are brought together by a sedentary version of the "affective solidarity" that is evident according to Elaine Aston at the locally performed intersectional dance project One Billion Rising. 49 Although very differently involved from the latter's flash-mob cohort, I would argue that performers and audience members who gather at both ice&fire events and at the readings of Seven produced by Hedda Produktion, are brought together by the kind of "goal-directed" purpose identified by Aston. As she claims of participants in One Billion Rising, they share an appetite for a "story" that articulates counter-hegemonic, humanitarian and/or feminist values. To return to Arendt's terminology, the testimonial forms I discuss here, expressed and grounded in individual, intimate, and painful realities brought into the public realm by means of "artistic transposition," counter anti-humanitarian or neoliberal discourses that would cancel supplicants' claims to support or asylum. 50 At the readings, an enhanced sense of connectedness and responsibility is harnessed, as proceedings are carefully orchestrated to flow into a discussion session with performers and audience members. In these sessions, appropriate action is identified (relevant to the resources and interests of the local communities), and a further commitment encouraged to a public sphere governed by mutual respect and active engagement. Here the "social processes" that to Iris Marion Young make possible "a model of responsibility based on social connection" are activated through public activity and dialogue that commits to local action and humanitarian values.51

Accountabilities and Action in Professional and Public Spheres

The story-telling tactics deployed by the producers of *Seven* and *Asylum Monologues* play important roles in opening dialogue that leads to the recognition of humanitarian issues and activates changes to legal and cultural structures and practices. With Hedda Produktion, which first produced *Seven* in Sweden in 2008 under director-producer Krausz Sjögren, *Seven on Tour* has been performed in diverse locations, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, the Ukraine, and Bangladesh. In these iterations, the "brand" developed around the project is a valuable asset, bolstering the chances of forming and strengthening the investment of a local community of stakeholders, including universities, government bodies, businesses, and charities. In these contexts, the choice of readers for the testimonies is not concerned primarily with notions of authenticity in casting, but with the leveraging of potential partners who can activate change. Workshops that precede and follow the performances have time only to make use of simple performance strategies, but also aim to make energizing and productive interventions into participants'

working practices. 52 According to Cecilia Wikström, of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, who was one of seven female MEPs who performed *Seven* at the European Parliament in 2010, "being politicians, we are always on the surface of everything....To come together and to focus on a literary text has never been done before in this House." 53 Her comments suggest a collaborative and creative disruption to the normal round of emails and meetings around a project that engages participants affectively and corporeally with the life and experience of another human being. As with the "community of interest" imagined and formed by Bacon's ice&fire around asylum seekers, Hedda's tactics form a constellation of parties invested in the recognition of need and of human potential, rather than a hierarchal structure that offers to rescue or reward the vulnerable individual. 54



Hedda Krausz Sjögren rehearsing with artist Vesa Quena, 2013. Photo credit: Malinda Hoxa.

In addition to the tactic of infiltrating structures in which individuals can effect change, performances of both Seven and Asylum Monologues also contribute to a sense of a democratic and egalitarian sphere of public responsibility. At the event I attended at University College London (UCL), Seven was read by the University's Provost and six of its Vice-Provosts as part of a series of free-of-charge events to mark International Women's Day in 2015. After the reading of the testimonies of abuse and activism by the seven powerful male academics, young female students in the audience challenged them on the lack of female representation at the highest levels of the university, and on the prevalence of sexual abuse among students. One academic admitted that he would have to step down in order to make way for female colleagues. $\frac{55}{2}$ On another striking occasion in 2014, the play was performed by seven NATO generals in military uniform at the Alliance auditorium at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. For me, watching the footage of this event is a reminder of the geopolitical, military, and territorial contexts that might otherwise be downplayed by the narrative of individual achievement that is emphasized in *Seven*'s testimonies. 56 In my interview with Krausz Sjögren she reminded me of the ritualistic function of theatre, gathering people to discuss ethical issues and contributing to democratic accountability. It is a sentiment echoed by Annecy Hayes, Associate Artist at ice&fire: theatre "is able to move people" and "to hold people to account in one room." 57 The tactic of casting powerful individuals to read "real" life stories in front of a group of witnesses both imbues these performers with a sense of responsibility, and creates an expectation that they will take action. Further, the question and answer sessions enable audience members to go beyond the passive and limited "gallery" status they are often granted in the public sphere to become an active and

participatory body of individuals who insist on the accountability of leadership. ⁵⁸ In many cases, such as in its campaign for lamps at bus stations so that female students can study longer in the library on Bangledesh university campuses, or in its call for policy change on gender-based violence in Ukraine and Serbia, the sustained involvement of Hedda Produktion aims to push through actual practical and cultural change that will improve women's lives. ⁵⁹

Equally concerned to make change happen, ice&fire practitioners recognize that they are often invited to perform *Asylum Monologues* to already aware and active individuals and audiences. On certain occasions, they are able to reach and challenge people whose work administers the recognition on which the all-important legal status of asylum seekers depends. At a performance in the UK Home Office in 2010, ice&fire confronted staff with accounts of beheadings, gang rapes, and other horrific abuses suffered by asylum seekers in their home countries, as well as a testimony from Louise Perrett, an ex-Border Agency employee who spoke to the press and to a parliamentary committee. In this piece, the influence of wider discourses and narratives upon the treatment of asylum seekers is clear. Louise's testimony describes how staff are trained to believe that asylum seekers are "potentially dangerous," that "these people are probably lying to you," and that their "responsibility" is to catch the "bogus asylum seeker." According to Bacon, the forty-five minutes of discussion scheduled to follow the performance turned into ninety.

Unsurprisingly, when the UK Foreign Office itself commissioned ice&fire to produce a script for the 2015 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in London it was reluctant to endorse the inclusion of a testimony from a Sri Lankan national whose application for asylum had been refused and who was held at an immigration detention center at the time of the interview. As I have argued, these monologues testify to a version of the UK as a brutalizing and hostile state, in contrast to which asylum seekers' humanitarian standards offer desirable norms of conduct. At the same time, ice&fire monologues suggest a narrative that "saves" the UK by instantiating a humanitarian activism through which all citizens can act on the recognition of human need. A ticket collector Mary meets on a train makes calls to her colleagues to help her on her journey. When she arrives in Glasgow there is a network of people, including Margaret and Phil from the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees and Asylum Seekers, who help her evade Immigration. Another ice&fire piece, *Asylum Dialogues*, is specifically about surprising encounters between British citizens and asylum seekers that elicited many acts of generosity and solidarity.

As I have suggested, combined and entwined, the testimonies gathered and scripted both by ice&fire practitioners and by the makers of *Seven* aim to impeach dominant structures and institutions of power, suggesting alternative humanitarian counter narratives and networks. Although the stories that emerge from their interviews can sometimes enforce dominant disciplinary discourses, their methods of making suggest a dialogic and reflexive storytelling, grounded in processes that engage with and aim to honor the "whole" person whose life story is constructed. Performances help to create a public sphere that practices responsibility and encourages accountability by attending to the presence of others, and which actively infuses audiences through listening and dialogue with a sense of shared commitment to humanitarian values and actions.

In my research I have been conscious of my own efforts to balance a sense of responsibility to the practitioners who have generously supported me in writing this article, a necessary selection process that could itself lead to the misrepresentation and misrecognition of their work, my own institutionalized position of academic privilege, and the demands of scholarly practice. I offer this article, however, in a spirit of critical activism with which scholarship might usefully play a role in interrogating and rebalancing

issues of local and global injustice, and which I hope contributes to an active public realm committed to the audibility of its citizens and a shared sense of responsibility to issues of global injustice.

Notes

- 1. Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25.
- 2. In the UK, the term "verbatim" is often preferred to "documentary" to describe a style of theatre where the exact words of an interviewed subject are reproduced. Harry Derbyshire and Loveday Hodson, "Performing Injustice: Human Rights and Verbatim Theatre," Law and Humanities 2 (2008): 198.
- 3. David Michael Boje and Grace Ann Rosile, "Storytelling," in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research, Volume II*, ed. Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos and Elden Wiebe (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010), 899.
- 4. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998 {1958}), 50.
- 5. See Annabel Herzog, "Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility," *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 10 (2004): 39.
- 6. "History," Vital Voices, accessed December 19, 2015, http://www.vitalvoices.org/about-us/history.
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å Bio

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Concealment, Revelation, and Masquerade in Europe's Asylum Apparatus: Intimate Life at the Border

Emma Cox

ABSTRACT In 2010, a landmark UK Supreme Court case was won on behalf of two gay men, from Cameroon and Iran, whose applications for asylum due to sexual identity had previously been rejected on the basis of a prevailing "reasonable tolerability" concept—that is, the view that gay applicants could conceal their homosexuality by acting discreetly upon [...]

In 2010, a landmark UK Supreme Court case was won on behalf of two gay men, from Cameroon and Iran, whose applications for asylum due to sexual identity had previously been rejected on the basis of a prevailing "reasonable tolerability" concept—that is, the view that gay applicants could conceal their homosexuality by acting discreetly upon return to their countries of origin. Such "discretion" would, of course, necessitate precisely the opposite of the performances of self that have been required in refugee determinations based upon sexual persecution, wherein the evidencing of homosexuality affords applicants little personal privacy.

Ironically, reports of intrusive and degrading demands for self-revelation have become more high profile since the 2010 ruling, implicating the UK border agency in a culture of suspicion regarding the evidencing of an applicant's homosexuality. For heterosexual asylum seekers and adjudicated refugees, meanwhile, the surveillance of intimate life is also becoming more stringent. A 2016 report from an irregular migrant camp in Dunkirk, France highlighted the plight of two men, both naturalized British citizens and former refugees, who have been prevented from bringing their wives and children to the UK because they do not meet the income threshold set under the border agency's family visa categories. Investigations of suspected "sham" marriages have increased sharply in the $UK, \frac{2}{3}$ while in Germany, some citizen activists have entered into "protective marriages," risky acts of purportedly ethical deception to prevent an asylum seeker's deportation.³ These examples signal the extent of the EU's asylum apparatus' encroachment into the personal lives of those who are compelled and instrumentalized by its visa-granting capacities. They also reveal something of a contradiction concerning official validation of sexual and/or family life: such validation may derive from traits held to be ontological or attainable, meaning that refugee applicants can find themselves constructed by models of identity that are alternately intrinsic or presentational. Both models, however, prove to be performative.

Some of the fraught dynamics and optics of this performativity are highlighted in two recent artistic works, both concerned with forced migration: a British solo play, *Nine Lives* (2014), and an Italian documentary film, *On The Bride's Side* (2014). I want to situate these works in the context of EU asylum mechanisms in order to elucidate the ways such structures and the wider social and representational nexuses in which policy is embedded

legislate (in the fullest sense of the word) performances of sexual orientation and marital status. Considered together, Nine Lives and On The Bride's Side are suggestive of a peculiar oscillatory tension between concealment, self-revelation, and masquerade as embodied tactics for leveraging justice in the context of migrant belonging. Distilled in the play and the film, these tactics articulate to larger questions about refugee "appearance" and to the way European asylum jurisdictions and social topographies are set up to adjudicate performances of intimate or private life. In Nine Lives, a solo piece about a gay Zimbabwean asylum seeker's experience in the UK, the necessity to prove homosexuality is shown to demand intrusive representations of self, whilst the sociality of resettlement produces various forms of self-concealment, along with moments of self-revelatory drag. In On the Bride's Side, a documentary about a group of citizen activists and asylum seekers who undertake a journey from Milan to Stockholm, bridal-party masquerade facilitates the irregular crossing of European borders, in the process showing up the effects of hyper-heteronormative appearance. Both play and film bring to the fore some of the ways performances of normative and non-normative identities generate appearances conditioned by Europe's evidence-obsessed immigration jurisdictions, in the process gesturing to just how far the intimate selves of noncitizens have been commandeered for the public interest.

Asylum claims that rest on personal or intimate life, whether in relation to homophobic persecution or to partner and family unification, are difficult to secure. Under EU law, a threshold must be met to constitute persecution of homosexual asylum applicants. In 2013, the Court of Justice of the European Communities upheld a 2004 directive by confirming that "the criminalisation of homosexual acts per se does not constitute an act of persecution. However, a term of imprisonment which sanctions homosexual acts and which is actually applied in the country of origin which adopted such legislation must be regarded as being a punishment which is disproportionate or discriminatory and thus constitutes an act of persecution." Claiming asylum on the basis of persecution for homosexuality often falls under the "Particular Social Group" category of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, but the UK Home Office's current Asylum Policy Instruction on "Sexual Identity Issues in the Asylum Claim" (2015) explains that persecution in sexual identity cases can intersect with and be concurrent with any of the Convention's other grounds for persecution: race, religion, nationality, political opinion. ⁵ The 2010 Supreme Court case rested on a distinction between intrinsic and presentational selfhood and the applicants' representatives successfully argued that the latter could not supersede the former: that concealing one's homosexuality was not reasonable or tolerable. One of the judges, Lord Rodger, called attention to what self-concealment as a daily practice might entail, highlighting the "gradations" of curtailment glossed by the prevailing concept of reasonable tolerability:

It is convenient to use a phrase such as "acting" or "behaving" 'discreetly' to describe what the applicant would do to avoid persecution. But in truth he could do various things. To take a few examples. At the most extreme, the applicant might live a life of complete celibacy. Alternatively, he might form relationships only within a circle of acquaintances whom he could trust not to reveal to others that he had gay relationships. Or, he might have a gay partner, but never live with him or have him to stay overnight or indulge in any display of affection in public. Or the applicant might have only fleeting anonymous sexual contacts, as a safe opportunity presented itself. The gradations are infinite. 6

As well as espousing the view that sexuality is intrinsic to one's being in the world, Lord Rodger further proposed a conflation of sexuality with race insofar as both, he claimed, are to be understood as innate characteristics:

No-one would proceed on the basis that a straight man or woman could find it reasonably tolerable to conceal his or her sexual identity indefinitely to avoid suffering persecution. Nor would anyone proceed on the basis that a man or woman could find it reasonably tolerable to conceal his or her race indefinitely to avoid suffering persecution. Such an assumption about gay men and lesbian women is equally unacceptable. Most significantly, it is unacceptable as being inconsistent with the underlying purpose of the Convention since it involves the applicant denying or hiding precisely the innate characteristic which forms the basis of his claim of persecution [...]^Z

The case was decided on the basis of what was deemed unreasonable requirements for feigned performances of identity. The view that sexuality is empirical or ontological in the same way as race (and *both* such assumptions are problematic) sits uneasily alongside the markedly ideological and discursive methods as well as cultural referents used to determine sexuality in asylum cases.

Even as it rejected the notion that sexuality may reasonably be concealed or exposed by choice, the 2010 judgment has been followed by several high profile cases that have rested upon the capacity of an applicant to perform intrinsic homosexuality to the satisfaction of caseworkers, in order to evince a well-founded fear of persecution.⁸ Reports of humiliating interview techniques during asylum determination processes have attracted significant media attention in the UK in recent years. In 2014 the Home Office undertook an internal review after MPs found that asylum seekers were being asked to present sexually explicit photographs of themselves in order to prove their homosexuality. ⁹ This came in the wake of global petitions and pressure from MPs highlighting the degrading treatment of LGBT asylum seekers in their interviews with Home Office caseworkers. 10 The absurdity of certain performances of self demanded by the Home Office was picked up on in 2015 in a sarcastic piece in UK tabloid the Mirror, which invited readers to take an online quiz to generate a personalized answer to the question, "Does the Home Office Think You're Gay?" 11 In her analysis of how "deportation as a state of emergency structures the queer migration narratives" of lesbian asylum seekers, Rachel Lewis discusses the UK case of a lesbian asylum seeker from Uganda, Brenda Namigadde, whose homosexuality came under suspicion due to her lack of interest in lesbian magazines and other queer cultural production, but who was granted a stay of deportation in 2011 after intense media attention. 12 Lewis notes that the resulting "Brenda Namigadde Effect [...] set a new legal precedent for perceived homosexuality as grounds for political asylum in the United Kingdom. $\frac{13}{12}$

Despite such victories, worst-outcome scenarios have not been avoided. One of the most high profile in recent years, that of lesbian asylum seeker Jackie Nanyonjo, who was deported to Uganda in 2014 after failing to convince UK immigration authorities that she faced persecution because of her sexuality, points starkly to the limit capacity of border mechanisms to be necropolitical or death-producing; Nanyonjo was injured during her deportation and died eight weeks later, in hiding from Ugandan authorities as a known gay activist. A UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee memorandum on this and similar cases of "enforced removal" implicated the border agency's deportation subcontractor, Tascor, in Nanyonjo's demise: "[a]Ithough JN resisted, the removal was carried out with the guards applying restraining techniques and an excessive use of force. Having landed in Uganda, the escort handed JN over to the Ugandan authorities, who held her for many hours and made it impossible for her to receive medical attention." The ongoing UK case of Nigerian lesbian asylum seeker and LGBT rights activist, Adejumoke Apata has rested upon an initial determination in 2013 that her sexuality was fabricated and that her previous relationship with a man as well as her being a mother placed her

outside the social group of "lesbian." The case, for which Apata submitted photographs and a DVD as evidence of her sexual life, rested on an intrinsic and non-volitional understanding of sexuality and the view that Apata had, apparently, chosen. The Home Secretary's barrister, Andrew Bird, stated "[y]ou can't be a heterosexual one day and a lesbian the next day. Just as you can't change your race." 16 In 2015 Apata's appeal was rejected in the High Court.

The Home Office's latest Asylum Policy Instruction on "Sexual Identity Issues in the Asylum Claim" (2015) has sought to address controversies surrounding the nature of status determinations in sexuality-related asylum cases. The instructions plot finely nuanced distinctions as a roadmap for balancing a "shared burden" of proof between the necessity for applicants to submit to detailed evidentiary self-revelation and the requirement for caseworkers to avoid undue instigation. Section 4.5, "Considering self identification as lesbian, gay or bisexual" states:

A detailed account of someone's experiences in relation to the development and realisation of their sexual identity can help to establish their credibility by establishing how and when they realised that they were of that identity. It is therefore important to establish the range of life experiences that may have informed or affected an individual's sexual identity or how they are perceived. Caseworkers must, however, test the evidence submitted and explore assertions made at interview. 18

Section 4.8, "Responding to issues around sexually explicit narratives" is clear that caseworkers should concentrate on explicating persecution or fear thereof resulting from sexual activity and not the activity itself:

Home Office policy is clear – detailed questioning about claimants' sexual practices must not be asked and there are no circumstances in which it will be appropriate for the interviewer to instigate questions of a sexually explicit nature. This includes questions about explicit sexual activity or physical attraction. Caseworkers must not ask for or seek such information. It is sufficient only to record such narratives. However, where such narratives present credibility concerns with earlier disclosures, caseworkers should explore these to seek clarity. This applies only to the events around the reported sexual activity, not the activity itself. 19

The bureaucratic propriety contained tonally within this document sits alongside (and is meant in large part to address) the reported inappropriateness and even prurience of some of the face-to-face practices it scaffolds. The disjunction between these two arms of state power—the written word and the embodied encounter—underscores observations made by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams in his 2015 Orwell Lecture, "War, Words and Reason: Orwell and Thomas Merton on the Crises of Language." Here Williams sought to diagnose something about the way power works through a particular kind of language, a "bureaucratic redescription of reality" that ultimately blocks response: it is, he argued, "language that is designed to be no-one's in particular, the language of countless contemporary manifestos, mission statements and regulatory policies, the language that dominates so much of our public life, from health service to higher education. This is meant to silence response." Despite such carefully worded directives as those contained in the abovementioned Asylum Policy Instruction, the conglomerated implication of it and the 2010 Supreme Court judgment and publicized LGBT asylum cases seems to be an insistence that homosexuality cannot reasonably be concealed by means of behavior, but that its ontology might also be questioned on the same performative basis.

For adjudicated refugees attempting to reunify their families (partners²¹ and children under 18), administratively compelled performances of private life also demand personal revelation, albeit less explicitly concerned with sexual activity. The right to family reunification for refugees is established in a 2003 EU Directive, but EU member states apply the directive differently with respect to evidence thresholds, timeframes within which applications must be made, and place of application. Because family reunion applications can usually only be made by status refugees, asylum seekers may remain ineligible to apply for months or years until their cases are decided. In a report by the Refugee Studies Centre (Oxford) in September 2014, Cynthia Orchard and Andrew Miller explain that while most EU nations have provisions for family reunification for refugees, practical challenges including a "lack of documentation and difficulties for family members in accessing European embassies" 22 intervene in the consistent application of the principle. They add that ad hoc responses to the current crisis in Europe have had mere transitory effects; for example, Switzerland's implementation in September 2013 of an expanded family reunification programme for Syrians was cancelled in November of the same year. 23

In the UK, reunion for refugee applicants is an onerous process; Scottish solicitors Drummond Miller recently reported an increase in requests for DNA evidence to satisfy the Home Office of a genetic relationship with a child, even where birth certificates have been provided.²⁴ Here biological ontology manifests a biocultural function. When a refugee has been granted citizenship through naturalization, the demand for proof shifts to financial means: minimum income thresholds are implemented in Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and the UK, where a £18,600 minimum income threshold for spouse and partner visas is made even more burdensome by the addition of substantial increments for each dependent child. Here partners are administratively transformed into "sponsors," children into "dependents." I referred at the start of this essay to the cases of naturalized British citizens, both former refugees, residing in the squalid conditions of Dunkirk's irregular migrant camp who have been prevented from bringing their wives and children to the UK because they do not meet the UKBA's income threshold for partner visas. This situation articulates up to a point with the border agency's long-standing culture of suspicion regarding "bogus" marriages—of which I will say more below—but here, a lack of financial means forecloses even the opportunity to prove the genuineness of a relationship. The UK government's implementation of the minimum income threshold for spouse and partner applications has been widely criticized as unreasonable and punitive outside the sphere of asylum. $\frac{25}{2}$ What it implies in any case is that when it comes to the state's intervention into the intimate life of noncitizens, monetary restrictions enact the closure of the border space in which representations of a relationship's legitimacy as intimate partnership would occur.

The two artistic works that I discuss below bring to the fore questions about how migrant performativity-for-the-state manifests and how asylum seekers might become agentive within the law's defining frameworks, and/or those of wider society. Over recent years, theatre, performance, and literature scholars have traced the ways asylum seekers are required to present persuasive, consistent and verifiable narratives of persecution during asylum application processes, noting how such narratives inform, sometimes problematically, artistic representations of and by refugees. There is not a great deal of performance scholarship on the specificity of self-presentation required by LGBT asylum seekers in western immigration jurisdictions, but such cases are of particular concern given the risk that self-presentation will be intrusive and potentially degrading in a most intimate way. And as I have indicated, the positive developments over recent years, which include the 2010 UK Supreme Court case, and the United States' moves to recognize the rights of LGBT asylum seekers, and olittle to ameliorate the risk that the stringent

evidentiary paradigms under which asylum cases are heard intensify the spotlight cast upon the supposed ontology of applicants' sexualities.

In the context of partner-related migration, recent Freedom of Information (FoI) requests in the UK regarding "sham marriages" hint both at migrant tactics in this context and at how the codified private sphere of marriage is morally invested as matter of public interest and surveillance. 28 A 2014 Fol request lodged by British tabloid the *Daily* Express revealed a sharp increase in enforcement visits over sham marriages (from 204 visits in 2010 to 2,488 in 2014). 29 While this paper's report adopted a tone of migrantrelated moral panic, a similar Fol request by the Huffington Post UK drew different conclusions from the rise in enforcement visits, quoting immigration barrister Colin Yeo, who cautioned that "genuine marriages were being disrupted," and in light of the finding that 74% of cases were reported by suspicious registrars (compared to 27.4% in 2010), and contended that "[r]egistrars are too quick to report relationships that are unconventional or that do not fit their model of expectations." In 2013, as part of a Home Affairs Committee enquiry into sham marriages, oral evidence from the Superintendent Registrar at Oxford Register Office offered a peculiar and distinctly theatrical explanation for how she detects inauthentic intimacy: "[i]f you're a genuine couple you don't expect to see them throw themselves over each other, but in our reception area sometimes those couples are slightly too amorous, where you don't need to be if you're a genuine couple." 31 Once again, we can perceive migration law (and not just asylum) as a domain of intimate and closely-watched performances for the state and its agents.

Nine Lives

One of the first scenes in the solo work *Nine Lives* by Zimbabwean British playwright Zodwa Nyoni explodes with biodynamism: asylum seeker Ishmael sprints desperately fast as a roiling soundscape of an agitated crowd and accelerating drumbeat seem to spur him on. Actor Lladel Bryant appears close to toppling forward as he moves faster and faster on the spot in a small space at north east London's Arcola Theatre, where I saw this work. The embodied motif encapsulates a familiar image of refugeeness defined by the inexorable onward trajectory, but here the propulsive energy is startling, and seems to proffer some of its urgency to the silent, seated bodies in the audience. Nyoni's six-scene play, a monologue with sections of single-actor duologue, premiered at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 2014 and received its London premiere at the Arcola in 2016. On both occasions Alex Chisholm directed.

Play text and production accumulatively emphasize the coding of bodies and suggest ways in which seeking asylum institutes particular ways of taking up space and making place. Much of this occurs wordlessly. Early in the piece, Ishmael, who has travelled from Zimbabwe to England, improvises a homely zone out of his temporary accommodation, blowing dust from a small section of floor before carefully laying his coat down on it. His fastidiousness in even the poorest of conditions fleshes out dimensions to his character that are subtly counterweighted by the anonymous genericism of his clothing: a light Adidas jacket, loose-fitting jeans and blue-laced Everlast trainers conglomerating him with the global capitalism that has become integrated into so many millions of bodies. Ishmael's possessions are carried in a plastic suitcase that remains on stage for the duration. It contains a strange collection of items that delineates a fragmented lifeworld: a posed photograph of the young family of an Iranian asylum seeker, Cyrus, with whom Ishmael is housed in the UK for a while, a wooden beaded keepsake, a toy car, a pair of stiletto heels.

If the concealment of sexual orientation was, in the wake of the UK's 2010 Supreme Court decision, deemed an unreasonable burden to place upon asylum seekers, Nine Lives shows how, in the delicate and distressing acclimation of resettlement, concealment may remain a performative strategy for gaining acceptance. Ishmael attempts to "play straight" in order to preserve a burgeoning friendship with local Leeds woman Bex, a young mother who has been recently abandoned by her child's father. For all her troubles, Bex represents a form of transparent normativity that Ishmael (pretending to be the straight "Sam") finds himself drawn to, even if he soon runs from the charade. Within the framework of Bryant's solo performance, the brash Bex ultimately manifests as a phantom, only ever coming into the audience's field of vision indirectly when Ishmael "enacts" her (which he does in a vivid, exaggerated style that generates audience laughter). When recounting Bex's ends of particular conversations, Ishmael employs petulantly camp mannerisms. These constitute moments of cross-gender imitation (that are related to but distinct from cross-gender performance, given that Ishmael is recollecting on stage and therefore always "himself") and also work as theatrical signifiers of Ishmael's gay identity: in his being himself being Bex the audience comes to recognize Ishmael within stereotypical parameters of gay male enactment. His mimicry of his young female friend embodies a campness that can read as "accurate" in theatrical performances of gender, especially when such performances intersect with comic renderings of working class manners or mores. Here, Ishmael's performances as Bex are part of a performative competence conventionally associated with homosexual men. After a period of four months, and shortly after receiving a rejection letter from the Home Office, Ishmael reinitiates contact with Bex, introducing himself for the first time as Ishmael. Apologizing for his deception, he tries to articulate to her what it would mean for him to be at home in a space: "I know you don't think it's much, but I would rather have this park, this place as it is now as my own. At least then I can hold it. Waiting to be allowed to live is like flickering in and out [of] existence" (28). Bex's droll response is to extend a hand of friendship: "Hiya, Ishmael. Nice nice to meet yah, I mean properly yah."32

Narratively, Nine Lives presents Ishmael's oscillation from compelled self-revelation in the context of his asylum case, to his self-concealment in the context of meeting new people in Leeds, to his testing out of what a British gay identity might look and feel like. This latter context brings about a theatricalized coding of homosexuality that involves further ghosting of cross-gender performance. Ishmael's experience at a Leeds gay club is recalled in fragments of emotional memory and embodied in terms of liberating personal transgression as he carefully swaps his Everlast trainers for tall, sparkling stilettos (figure 1). He walks tentatively in the heels, incongruous beneath his loose jeans, getting a feel for new parameters of identity and gendered performance. He meets a drag queen who makes him feel differently human: "[i]t is more than I have ever seen. He, she, takes me by the hand. She tells me to dance, to let go. I'm awkward. Is this what it feels like to not be afraid? Is this what freedom feels like?...She leans in and speaks in a language that is only made for us."33 The scene generates a rather stereotypical conflation of cross-gender performance with homosexual identity formation, but its function as a moment in which Ishmael must symbolically and literally find his feet is nevertheless microcosmic of a nonnormative embodied dimension of refugee resettlement, one that remains underexplored in refugee-responsive theatre and film. For Ishmael, the experience, by re-attuning him to his own humanness, becomes self-revelatory (an insight), rather than self-revealing (an exposure).



Figure 1. Nine Lives, Arcola Theatre, London, 2016. Photo credit: Richard Lakos.

Ishmael's hope to make contact with his lover, also a refugee living in the UK, materializes forlornly in the talismanic device of a mobile phone, which connects only to a repetitive voice mail. It is not until the latter half of the play that Ishmael's lover finally answers one of his calls; the audience follows the stalling communication, in which Ishmael is rejected because his lover wants to put behind him the intimate "evidence" that underpinned his own asylum case. Ishmael's coerced transmutation into a body of evidence renders him just more emotional detritus manufactured by the asylum determination process. But Nine Lives is shadowed by, rather than based upon, the bureaucratic process itself. In this it differs from Chris MacDonald's 2014 debut, Eye of a Needle (Southwark Playhouse, London), in which sexual self-representation in the context of a cynical and Kafkaesque asylum bureaucracy is sharply prominent. (The Huffington Post praised this play's representation of "underfunded, understaffed offices: a generic public purgatory that evokes a waiting room, football stand, and death row all at once." 34) Macdonald's darkly comic portrayal of a pornographic fixation on women's sexual evidence amongst immigration caseworkers draws indirectly on Apata's high profile case. By contrast, in Nine Lives, the only reference to intrusive or degrading questioning is Ishmael's embarrassed recollection of being asked by an immigration official "to prove, that I am gay," an interrogation that included the questions, "what does a penis feel like? Why do I like it?" 35 But even here, Nyoni's brevity generates a sense that her character is withholding much more than he is revealing about the questioning he has undergone.

Nine Lives noticeably conveys its Leeds origins (as my formerly Leeds-resident coplaygoers confirmed), and this is in large part due to metatheatrical and extratheatrical elements. While the character of Ishmael speaks with what the stage directions describe as a "Zimbabwean accent" there are numerous sections in which Bryant's characterization of people encountered by Ishmael provides the context for regionally and socially specific resonances, informed by Bryant's own cultural competencies as a Leeds performer. His imitation of the accent and teenage vocal stylistics of young Bex, in particular—whom Bryant chucklingly refers to in a promotional video for the play as "very much a Leeds lass, very comical" —merges with his embodiment of Zimbabwean Ishmael to generate a curious corporeal palimpsest. In this capacity the production, whether by accident or design, avoided straightforward vocal significations of Ishmael's foreignness and enacted affiliations with a Yorkshire place of origin.

In its London staging, where Leeds might have signified another kind of distance, the production tapped into local community organizations and networks that lent it synergistic points of contact with existing stakeholders. The Arcola production

acknowledged LGBT and refugee activist initiatives and generated affiliate events, including a gala night with Ian McKellen, a jam session associated with Platforma Arts and Refugees Network, a music night with musicians from Zimbabwe and a spoken word evening, at which refugee and migrant poet collective "Bards without Borders" performed. The published text of Nyoni's play acknowledges the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group, Platforma Arts and Refugees Network, and City of Sanctuary, as well as Leeds Studio. These kinds of affiliations, platforms and co-leverages are often an important dimension of works like Nine Lives that directly address social injustices. Such productions' promoted enmeshments with existing collectives and grassroots initiatives seem implicitly to gesture towards the limits as well as the watermarks that theatrical work can constitute in its capacity as co-instigator of wider social awareness and change. Of course, limits are not the same as shortcomings, and perceiving community or political theatre within its chain-linked contexts can be a way of comprehending such theatre's multi-functionality: its event-quality (as, among other things, the intensification of imaginative and emotional capacities) working in conduit with its accumulative and associative function as representation flanked by prior and ongoing engagements. As far as leveraging justice is concerned, then, the potential power of refugee-responsive theatre might most usefully be recognized as embedded dynamically in networks of friends and associates. Such networks are especially meaningful in theatrical endeavors like Nine Lives, whose narratives are broadly drawn from and often recognizable to individuals and stakeholder communities for whom access to systems of justice may have been impeded.

On the Bride's Side

I outlined above some of the barriers facing refugees in their applications for reunion with intimate partners, as well as the increasing governmental concern to interrupt "sham" marriages. What happens when the (apparent) ceremonial moment of an intimate relationship's formalization activates other, non-governmental forms of social and cultural responsiveness? When might ceremonial appearance supersede (rather than be caught within) regulatory barriers, and what do such appearances tell us about the ways performances of socially-condoned intimacy intersect with other, non-condonable forms of undocumented border appearance? The 2014 documentary On The Bride's Side (in Italian, Io Sto con Ia Sposa, meaning I'm with the Bride) takes up the question of how the EU's border machine responds to heterosexual weddings (as distinct from partnerships themselves) by harnessing the aesthetics of the white wedding in the moment of attempted border crossing. The film was co-directed by Gabriele del Grande (a journalist), Antonio Augugliaro (a film editor and director), and Khaled Soliman al Nassiry (a poet and editor). It follows a journey that took place in November 2013 from Milan to Stockholm by five asylum seekers, Syrians and Palestinian-Syrians, and the dozen or so friends and associates who facilitated their irregular transit. The asylum seekers entered Europe via the Italian island of Lampedusa, which means that according to the EU's Dublin II regulation, 38 they should have lodged their asylum claims in Italy; but like many asylum seekers, these people have set their sights on Sweden as a nation that offers greater stability and the hope of a productive future. The group decides that their best shot of making the four-day journey from Italy to Sweden without detection is to pretend they are a wedding party. A Palestinian-Syrian activist friend (who also holds the 'lever' of a German passport) agrees to dress up as the bride, while one of the Syrian asylum seekers plays the part of the groom. The rest feign the roles of wedding guests.

What makes *On the Bride's Side* so interesting and unusual is its politicized and gendered staging of volition, amongst both European and asylum seeker participants. Here volition consists of a series of recorded acts of disobedience that carry the risk of criminal

prosecution for the European "traffickers," as they subversively call themselves, and of deportation for the asylum seekers. The filmmakers frame this collective disobedience in terms of heteronormative theatricality and as the re-making of community bonds across increasingly divided Mediterranean zones. An official online synopsis explains that the "journey not only brings out the stories and hopes and dreams of the five Palestinians and Syrians and their rather special traffickers, but also reveals an unknown side of Europe - a transnational, supportive and irreverent Europe that ridicules the laws and restrictions of the Fortress in a kind of masquerade." This kind of affective activism bears similarities with the German "protective marriages" to which I referred at the start of this essay; both are underpinned by impulses of care and responsibility for the wellbeing of noncitizens, and both utilize the capacities conferred by EU citizenship to cloak those without it. But in On the Bride's Side, the affective cloaking is an event-based capacity, rather than the kind of status change instituted by a legal marriage, however "bogus" or "protective" it may be. The film's participants are shown readying themselves for the masquerade—scrubbing up for their roles in the fake wedding party, getting haircuts and trying on smart clothes—in order to appear "legitimate" users of civic spaces: restaurants, highways, stations, train carriages, streets, city squares. The journey itself begins at dawn, in front of Milano Centrale station. Several scenes are filmed inside cars as the group travels in convoy, and this contained environment gives rise to both quotidian and intense exchanges in which hopes and fears emerge, engaging the audience via familiar modes of cinematic identification.



Figure 2. On the Bride's Side / Io Sto con la Sposa, 2014. Photo credit: Marco Garofalo.

One sequence traces a physically arduous part of the journey where the group walks across the Grimaldi Superiore, a steep pass from Italy to France (which is also a topographical border) (figure 2). They are received warmly on the other side by friends in a French coastal village, before moving on to Marseille where a lively evening is spent at a restaurant with supportive locals; it is then north through Luxembourg and on to a farmhouse near Bochum in northwest Germany where the group talks politics and plots their final push to Sweden. They continue onwards to Copenhagen, successfully negotiate the increasingly patrolled bridge to Malmo, and finally arrive in Stockholm undetected after a tense train journey. The directors' notes offer some insight into the processes of undertaking art and activism simultaneously:

A documentary and yet a political act, a real and yet fantastic story; 'On the Bride's Side' is all these things at once. And, right from the start, the hybrid nature of the film dictated a number of specific choices. First of all, there was

the script treatment: rather than writing dialogues and character parts, we organised the journey on the basis of scenes, imagining situations in which our characters, used to the presence of the cameras, could move freely. The filming, therefore, always had to adapt to the needs of the political act, because we really had to get to Sweden – it wasn't just for the film....The fact that we were sharing a great risk and a great dream inevitably united us. And this experience also changed our way of seeing things and helped us in the search for a new perception of the border. 40

People-smuggling is roundly condemned in most rhetoric on asylum and forced migration but in several scenes in the film the audience is privy to late night conversations about strategy, and watches as the group appears to plug into existing and new migrant routes, central to which are the homes of European citizens. Smuggling or trafficking gradually starts to expand its definition to encompass hospitality and assistance. Volition emerges of a kind of disobedient hospitality. There is undoubtedly a utopianism in the way the filmmakers-cum-activists see their intervention into Mediterranean community, but they nevertheless show how effectively alternative transnational networks may be mobilized in a digital age. The "film manifesto," posted on a crowd-funding website (which raised almost 100,000 euros), states:

The risk we're taking is crazy. But we believe there is a community of people in Europe and around the Mediterranean who hope, like us, that one day this sea will stop swallowing up the lives of its travellers and go back to being a sea of peace, where all are free to travel and where human beings are no longer divided up into legal and illegal.

Distinctions between legal and illegal are interrogated throughout. The film is not merely interested in staging the evasion of the law but in questioning law's ethics. Centrally, it is made very clear that the risk of prosecution is borne by the European citizens, not by the asylum seekers: it is a crime to traffic, but not to be trafficked. Not only does this situation instantiate the rightless "innocence" Hannah Arendt perceived as part of the subjugation of persecuted noncitizens ("[i]nnocence, in the sense of complete lack of responsibility, was the mark of their rightlessness as it was the seal of their loss of political status" 42), but we see through the film that it can militate against forms of radical hospitality.

The costumed body of the "bride," Palestinian activist Tasnim Fared, is the most visibly elaborate, gendered image of the ploy to get the group across European borders. For the filmmakers, the bride was the central embodied iconography; co-director Gabriele del Grande gives an insight into the rationale in a piece on the film written for Al Jazeera, with remarks like, "[t]he police would never check a bride's documents!" and "[i]t was deadly serious, yet the dream of the bride was stronger than any second thoughts we had." 43 Fared's costume, a full-length white gown, connotes a traditionally patriarchal arrangement and determines capacities of her movement and interaction. This is particularly apparent in the sequence in which the group crosses the Grimaldi Superiore. If unimpeded border crossing is supposedly ensured by the semantics of her bridal costume, Fared's own ability to walk with ease over the hill crossing is curtailed; she sometimes requires assistance from men, who hold her dress, or piggyback her. At the same time, Fared inhabits the costume with an air of casualness and it becomes visibly crumpled and disheveled over the course of the film, and at one point she changes into sturdy boots. The effect is a cumulative and subtle undermining of the bridal semiotics upon which the whole escapade is based. To a large extent, the conceit of "passing" as a bridal party manifests as an aesthetic and narrative device within the documentary as much as it does a necessity for illicit border crossings. Certainly, the participants' bridal

party disguises are not strictly required in scenes where they are shown to be worn during planning in the privacy of a home. It isn't at all clear that the bridal appearance was literally the aesthetic lever that facilitated the group's passage at any particular point of their journey. What the trick does, I would suggest, is informs our reading of the successive border crossings: as a spectator you soon come to recognize that getting through requires some kind of role-playing, or at least, sufficient preparedness for it. The film, therefore, both reveals and creates the conditions for its vision of a "transnational, supportive and irreverent Europe that ridicules the laws and restrictions of the Fortress in a kind of masquerade."

Here it is worth remembering that a border (whether political, geographical or social) comes into use, or is activated, only when an attempted border-crosser appears and encounters its authoritarian logic. Sophie Nield articulates this lucidly in terms of what she calls the "border machine" of immigration controls, which, by disaggregating the body from its representation in the form of identity documentation, "creates the condition of being 'beside oneself,' life disaggregated into presence and its proof. The machine of appearance demands that we perform ourselves before the law, in that no-man's land on the border between the body and its representation." 44 In the film, European borders materialize as sites in which the hyper-heteronormative performativity of the white wedding is a cultural code for unimpeded passage. To return to Nield's terminology, this is an aggregation of bodies and representations, only here the appearance of a wedding is intended to forestall the need to negotiate the law's "border machine" (it is worth reflecting on the likelihood that the appearance in recent months of fences and stricter border controls across the EU's Schengen Area may mean that attempts at socially compelled forestalling of the border machine would fail if they were attempted today). Following Kate Hepworth, if we seek to understand "'irregularisation' as those processes whereby one's presence within the nation is questioned or rendered illegitimate," 45 and not merely as the legal status "undocumented," we can understand the film as documenting a momentary regularization through masquerade.

The irreverent qualities of *On the Bride's Side*, and in particular, Fared's ambivalent bridal comportment, mean that the border's heteronormativity is slyly challenged in the film, if not exactly queered. Beyond the film itself, the filmmakers' invitation to audiences at the 2014 Venice Film Festival to attend the screening in bridal dresses calls for analyses beyond this paper's scope of the gendered performances associated with the film's reception. This Festival event was attended by the film's co-directors and several participants, including the refugees (three of whom have obtained asylum in Sweden, while two were returned to Italy under the Dublin II regulation), and the online availability of numerous smiling photographs from the event seem to speak to a mechanism of immunity from prosecution relating to the "trafficking" through hyper-visibility. In a climate where EU immigration jurisdictions actively seek to identify "sham marriages" or "protective marriages" (and where in the UK, both sham and genuine marriages have been interrupted pre- or mid-ceremony by border enforcement 46), the flippancy of *On the* Bride's Side's highly visible "bogus" wedding party and the celebratory optics of its Venice Festival screening seem particularly sharp. Certainly, the film's escapade was bold in testing out the sociality of the view that no one would bother a wedding party.

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Both *Nine Lives* and *On the Bride's Side* are concerned with how performances of intimate selves come into conjunction with, and are required by, oppressive and suspicious border regimes. In different ways, they also underscore the border's heteronormative aspect as far as culture and topography are concerned. The European social networks, legal frameworks, and regionalities imaged in the play and the film can be

seen to constitute sexualized and gendered "choreographies" of irregular transit and resettlement. As a term that describes the artful design of bodily sequences and appearances (individually or en masse), the application of "choreography" to the contexts of forced migration might cast light on the embodied consequences, and the possible "artfulness," of border mechanisms (territorial, political, social, legal, and administrative). Together with its coercive function as political machine, the border can manifest as a space of intense visibility, with asylum seekers required or deciding to conceal or reveal, or to undertake masquerades that situate themselves within models of personal life that may be purportedly intrinsic (innate) or presentational (attained). As I have sought to show, the surveilled, arbitrated contexts that generate such performatives mean that they can be ambivalent, at the very least, as embodied leverage that might be recognized as agency. But the sexualized and gendered administration of asylum seeking and irregular movement more generally constitutes an embodied politics into which a play like Nine Lives and a film like On the Bride's Side intervene, and with which such creative projects dialogue. These works do not simply offer insights into a status quo, but crucially imagine and rehearse new ways in which individuals may inhabit, exhibit, and settle themselves in a Europe that seeks to codify even the most intimate aspects of noncitizens' lives.

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<u>♣</u> Bio

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Coerced Performances? Trafficking, Sex Work, and Consent

Janelle Reinelt

ABSTRACT Since the millennium, there has been a growing global awareness about the business of human trafficking as it has exponentially expanded in relation to the neoliberal economic climate, the vast displacement of people through wars and conflict, and the growth of tourism and ecommerce. Because theatre and performance studies work through an epistemology of embodied [...]

Since the millennium, there has been a growing global awareness about the business of human trafficking as it has exponentially expanded in relation to the neoliberal economic climate, the vast displacement of people through wars and conflict, and the growth of tourism and e-commerce. Because theatre and performance studies work through an epistemology of embodied practices and symbolic codification, it is an exemplary site for commenting on and contributing to public knowledge about the trafficking issue. Highly visible public issues, such as trafficking, typically generate and maintain coded and symbolic rules of appearance for the bodies they describe. As those who are trafficked are in reality mostly invisible, missing, and silent, this can be seen as a substantial contradiction that goes to the heart of performance: the absent presence of all representation, the governmentality of biopolitics with its categories and classifications, the actual person who remains unknown beyond the performances that make her intelligible.

Jenny Edkins, writing about missing persons, has made an important distinction between the *what* and the *who* of such persons. If the "what" is the already perceived, intelligible set of characteristics or markers that can be grasped by reason of the existing order, the "who" cannot be captured: "But the who is what is lost and what is absolutely irreplaceable when someone goes missing. It is not just that there is no one there, but that that particular unique being, that particular someone, is not there. And this is why missing people disturb administrative classifications." I appreciate Edkins' work not only for the reminder that all official statistics, laws, and institutional attention do not make visible the subjects of human trafficking, but also for emphasizing that the "who" emerges in a relationality that often exists beyond the regimes of public visibility.

Nevertheless, the effort to leverage justice for trafficked persons necessitates struggle in realms both visible and invisible, as attempts to legislate, criticize, or shape public policy operate in the visible and indeed bureaucratic domain, while attempts to address, heal, and recover from trauma may occur elsewhere. Performance scholars can contribute in both realms: providing (performance) analyses of scenarios and roles governing the business of trafficking, public policy, and the law can yield insights into how the politics of trafficking determine definition, exclusion, and prescribed behaviors. Examination of representations of trafficked victims and survivors reveals a performative dimension embedded in the repetition and sedimentation of familiar tropes as well as occasional

glimpses of what is barely discernible. Performance practices are instrumental in therapeutic approaches to recovery, as both dance and theatre provide a relational context for survivors whether in private settings or in situations of public activism through art. However, each of these areas raises complex issues, well beyond my ability to fully address here. I will focus on the policy issues informing discussions of trafficking in several locations around the world (the US, Australia, and Europe primarily, followed by a focus on California) in order to show how matters of labor and exploitation play out in the trafficking scenarios in those regions. Because trafficking is deeply entwined with migrant labor and immigration control, it is an especially appropriate focus for examination at this time of heightened hostility to immigration and increasing awareness of trafficking. Other essays in this issue (Castillo, Noriega, Santana) describe and discuss in detail some representational strategies that have been created in theatrical performances, and Urmimala Sarkar Munsi describes how performance, specifically dance, can become a means of healing trauma. Together I hope our work can address both the visible and the elusive aspects of this issue and gesture to a program of further research appropriate to performance scholars who want to join the struggle to end trafficking.

In what follows, I'll look first at problems of definition and legislation, then examine some of the divisions among feminists and activists concerning how best to respond to women trafficked for sexual exploitation. The status of trafficked women, both as victims and as survivors, will be described in terms of performance, from two aspects: the construction of the public face of these women "on stage," and the private and often invisible predicaments they face behind the scenes. I'll look at one organization that uses the arts to address recovery, and finally, I'll suggest some ways that theatre and performance scholars can actively participate in efforts to end human trafficking and to help its survivors.

A Question of Counting

Consider the following two accounts:

The U.N. crime-fighting office said Tuesday that 2.4 million people across the globe are victims of human trafficking at any one time, and 80 percent of them are being exploited as sexual slaves....\$32 billion is being earned every year by unscrupulous criminals running human trafficking networks, and two out of every three victims are women.²

The International Labour Organisation [ILO] estimated in 2012 that 18.7 million people are exploited in the private economy, by individuals or enterprises. Of these, 4.5 million (22 per cent) are victims of forced sexual exploitation, 98% of whom are women. Human trafficking has been estimated to generate 150 billion dollars a year, two-thirds of which is income from human trafficking. 4

The United Nations and the ILO are the most authoritative sources of global data on this topic, because they are international in scope and data management, and presumed to be "objective." Even so, one can hardly reconcile the two sets of statistics I have reported above. The UN and the ILO do not agree on the total number of persons trafficked, nor how much of it is sexual exploitation, nor even the number of women involved, since 98% of the ILO's 4.5 million estimate would still be nearing double the count of total trafficked according to the UN. How are we to grasp the problem?

First, looking more closely at these resources, the UN figures came from a 2012 briefing at a special meeting on trafficking at the General Assembly by Yuri Fedotov, the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, who was quoted by an AP reporter, who, we can

conjecture, might have misquoted him. Alternatively, although this meeting was held in 2012, perhaps the 2.4 figure came from the 2008 "Fact Sheet" of UN.GIFT (Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking), which estimates 2.5 million people are in forced labor, 43% are victims of sexual exploitation, of whom 98% are women and girls. However, it turns out that the UN source for these figures is actually the International Labour Organization figures from $2007,\frac{6}{2}$ revised by the ILO in 2012 based on a more robust methodology as described in their report. Even so, 43% of 2.5 million people would not come close to the ILO revised figures of 4.5 million victims of sexual exploitation.

This confusing and circular investigation of the data is typical of attempts to quantify and describe the scope of the human trafficking problem worldwide. There are at least three good reasons why it is difficult to collect and verify this data. First, the characteristics of trafficking include that it is an underground practice, often unreported, and outside normal channels of demographic data. Second, the differences in legislation covering trafficking across nation states are substantial, and moreover most victims have only a weak legal status in most countries under these laws, often caught between their countries of origin and the country to which they were trafficked—they are virtually stateless in this circumstance. Third, the absence of comparable cross-nation statistics of reported crimes, indictments, and court cases means there is no global database. Also missing is comprehensive data on organized efforts at support, treatment, and survivor outcomes. §

The instability and incommensurability of data across the globe creates serious problems for the coordination of efforts to combat trafficking and also creates a political weakness in the case that trafficking is an important problem needing public attention. Some readers may be thinking that the ability to accurately survey the scope of the problem may not be so critical since the numbers are high and rising in most accounts: "So who cares how many precisely—there's enough to demand a response!" However, this is not always a persuasive view, as we shall detail below. (A self-reflexive observation: in order to indicate the approximate scope of some aspects, I will myself quote statistics below, sometimes without comment—even having made the argument about their unreliability.) The double-bind is that to persuade and inform, one needs to say some concrete things about these issues, while knowing full well that any one statistic might be challenged. In order to see how this issue comes back to haunt anti-traffickers, it is necessary to consider one other factor: the definition of terms as they have come to be accepted internationally.

The agreement on a definition of human trafficking that can be accepted across the world was concluded in 2000 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the "United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children." It defines trafficking as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, or fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. ⁹ [Emphasis mine.]

In negotiating among many states, organizations, and NGOs to develop this definition, a number of ideological struggles came into play, chiefly focused on the phrase,

"exploitation of the prostitution of others." This phrase is ambiguous as to its exact meaning because it represents a compromise following extensive disagreement over whether the protocol should cover only forced prostitution or all prostitution. Questions of consent and coercion were at the heart of this distinction, and particular nations and international organizations such as the "Coalition Against Trafficking in Women" (CATW) lobbied to have the protocol include opposition to legalizing prostitution. Disputes over the legitimacy of prostitution almost prevented the convention from passing, but this compromise language allowed it to pass, and as of 2016, 117 UN member states have signed the protocol and 169 are parties to it, consolidating it as the internationally-authorized definition.

The policy debates within different nation-states over human trafficking legislation and programs are marked by these divisions between different groups of actors. In the United States, for example, the anti-trafficking lobby is often made up of coalitions of feminists and evangelical Christians. ¹¹ During the Bush presidency they were a strong political pressure group, responsible for shaping language in several important bills, including the "Trafficking Victims Protection Act" (TVPRA), the federal anti-trafficking law in the United States. They tend to be moralistic about the evils of sex work and abolitionist in terms of policy and law—meaning they see prostitution as correctly illegal and consider trafficking a problem growing out of prostitution. On the other side, sex worker groups and feminists of a more libertarian persuasion oppose the harsher penalties for prostitution sought by this lobby, and attempt to downplay the seriousness of the trafficking problem by pointing out the unreliability of the numbers, and the intrusion of the government into the lives of its citizens. They have gained ballast in recent years after 9/11 by complaining about heightened surveillance of individuals and the management of trafficking under the Department of Homeland Security, the defense body that targets terrorism. The irony is that the welfare of trafficked women and children is compromised by the political differences among groups who might be thought of as natural allies. So, why do scholars and activists who proclaim themselves to be Left or feminist try to thwart government's efforts to intervene in trafficking to identify and protect victims?

The Sex and Labor Question

At the heart of the matter is the disagreement about considering sex as work, and whether or not prostitution harms all sex workers. Perhaps more broadly, it is a dispute over whether harm is implicit in the exchange of sex for money. In countries such as the US where prostitution is illegal, many anti-trafficking activist groups are "abolitionists," a term used to indicate an anti-prostitution stance against either legalizing sex work or granting employment protections and recognition to sex workers—note the rhetorical connection to the early abolitionist movement against slavery in the nineteenth century. The use of slavery language to describe forced labor effectively hearkens back to the global slave trade and has particular resonances for countries like the US with specific histories of institutionalized slavery.

In other countries such as Australia, where sex work is legal in parts of the country, some anti-trafficking activists sharply distinguish sex work from the forced labor of trafficking. Organized sex workers in both countries are often against anti-trafficking measures because of the impact on their efforts to secure work-related rights and benefits. For example, Janelle Fawkes, the CEO of Australia's Scarlet Alliance, an organization that represents and supports sex workers, points out that policy discussions referring to the sex industry are now always linked to the trafficking issue:

[The s]ex industry law reform discussion is no longer about the occupational health and safety of sex workers. It's no longer about incentives to comply. It's

no longer about increasing safety or looking at the real issues for sex workers. It's now about this perceived set of [trafficking] issues. 12

The term "perceived" signals the argument that the numbers associated with trafficking have been inflated and that it might not be a large social problem but rather a "moral panic," and, like the nineteenth century fear of so-called "white slavery," largely imagined. Not that all sex workers deny the exploitation of trafficking. It is more complex—seeing their own labor issues displaced in legislative and policy debates, sex workers understandably try to re-center advocacy of their own reforms. In The Politics of Sex Trafficking; A Moral Geography, the Australian authors (who are feminists) illustrate the force of argumentation concerning these issues contrasting the US to their own context. 13 Erin O'Brien, Sharon Hayes, and Belinda Carpenter argue that "abolitionist" coalitions of right-wing religious groups and feminists have linked sex work and trafficking together in ways that have hurt sex workers' struggles for employment recognition and protection. They also rely on the charge that statistics are inflated, and that only worst case scenario stories (narratives) are published and stressed in the media and in lobbying the government. There is also an argument that poor women and women from developing countries are not accorded the respect of acknowledging the possibility of agency and choice on their part, and so are discriminated against. Legalization of sex work, and regulating it to protect its workers is the more important activism, and ultimately more effective against trafficking as well, from this point of view.

However, there is some evidence that trafficking increases when prostitution is legalized, although it is contested and not conclusive. 14 A 2012 empirical study by German and British economists looked at 150 countries to assess whether legalizing prostitution increases human trafficking. They identify two competing theories: the "scale" effect holds that legalizing prostitution leads to an expansion of the prostitution market and thus an increase in human trafficking; the "substitution" effect holds that domestic workers will fill the demand in place of trafficked persons when domestic workers can work legally and are protected under the law. The results of their study, however, indicate that the scale effect is the stronger: "Our quantitative empirical analysis for a crosssection of up to 150 countries shows that the scale effect dominates the substitution effect. On average, countries with legalized prostitution experience a larger degree of reported human trafficking inflows." 15 The researchers are cautious about this result, calling for more research and lamenting "the clandestine nature of both the prostitution and trafficking markets" (which makes the data base somewhat unreliable). Moreover, when you separate the low income countries from the high, "the effect of legal prostitution is no longer significant." And democracies have a 13.4% points higher probability of receiving high reported inflows. At best, we might consider these results a snapshot of the situation pre-2012, and most notably strongest with respect to highincome democracies with already high demand (US, Europe, and select others).

In other countries, some laws and policies are now targeting the consumer, following the "Nordic solution" which bans prostitution but prosecutes its customers rather than sex workers (notably in Sweden). While this approach improves the legal treatment of some sex workers, it also attempts to interfere with and shut down the trade itself, and many sex workers still oppose this. However, from the point of view of countries such as the US, Australia, and other democratic countries with high levels of income, targeting the customers has a special suitability to contesting trafficking since the exploited are mostly women and children from the developing world while the consumers are often first-world men. According to some accounts, only 10% of all trafficked people worldwide come from industrialized nations yet 50% of worldwide profits are made in industrialized nations. Asian countries have the highest total number of persons trafficked for sex, but Europe is

the top destination for traffickers, and the US is one of the ten countries identified as having the most profits. ¹⁶ Thus in terms of redressing the problem, a number of activists, not all of whom are abolitionists, support the prosecution of consumers of services from trafficked people as it targets the male privilege of first-world individuals who tend not to see themselves as contributing to a problem like trafficking, in spite of their implication within it. Longitudinal research of the impact of this approach will be needed to provide more conclusive proof of its effects on demand for the sex industry.

The human trafficking predicament becomes further complicated when we turn to issues of migrant labor in this time of global flows. Women are heavily affected by the flexibilization of low-wage labor in service and informal economies such as domestic, care, and sex sectors. As Rutvica Andrijasevic writes in Migration, Agency and Citizenship in Sex Trafficking (2010), "The demand for low-wage labour in the service sector, which is both gendered and racialized, encourages women's migration and represents an alternative economic global circuit." 17 However, the benefits of such cross-border mobilization are not equally distributed. The condition of undocumented migrants was worsened when the Netherlands became the first EU country to legalize prostitution (in 2000). While the Dutch parliament acknowledged prostitution as a commercial activity subject to the same labor regulations and occupational guidelines as any other sector, undocumented migrant sex workers were not entitled to any of the new rights or protections. Andrijasevic points out: "In legalizing the work of EU nationals while keeping the work of non-EU nationals illegal, the sex sector followed the larger pattern of opening up markets and labour in Europe to the EU citizens and severely restricting the labour mobility of non-EU citizens." 18 In addition, Andrijasevic, puts yet another spin on this situation—she regrets the discouragement of eastern European women from making the cross-border journey, not as trafficked women, but as women who might seek their own advancement. She argues that anti-trafficking campaigns "equate women's informal labour migration with forced prostitution and indirectly encourage women to stay at home." 19 According to her, this reinforces traditional notions of womanhood, the gendered division of labor, and consolidates the old exclusions of women from the world outside the home.

In concluding this part of our discussion, I would emphasize that the tensions that cut across the analyses of this issue are three-fold: first, the ideological battle over prostitution/sex work divides women against themselves, and contains the historical baggage of puritanism, but also the neoliberal baggage of entrepreneurialism and individual choice. Second, the argument over statistical accuracy can be used by either side to further their positions, but is most often used to undercut advocacy that draws attention to a wide-spread and growing problem by denying or minimizing it. Third, the issue of coercion emerges as a troubling knot of undecidability. For the abolitionists, all sex work is coercive since no woman would choose this demeaning practice. For others, choice is relative to other available options. Coercion, still others argue, may be present even in cases where persons seemingly give consent, or are coerced when they realize that consent entails forced labor and often violence. In order to decide the adequacy/inadequacy of these interpretations, the statistics and categories of governmentality will not provide answers: what is needed are the elusive and mostly invisible lives of real persons who have been trafficked. For these insights, we must turn to local scale narratives, ethnographies, interviews, and self-disclosure. Some of our evidence will by its nature be anecdotal and partial, but nevertheless powerful and persuasive.

From Macro to Micro: Focus on Local Immigration and Law Enforcement

Beyond the large NGOs that work nationally and internationally to educate the public and their legislators about human trafficking (such as CATW or the Polaris Project), there are a large number of smaller organizations working locally or regionally. I turn now to northern California, where I live, and to what I have learned about trafficking within the state and my particular location in the bay area. Gena Castro Rodriguez is the Head of Victim's Services for the City of San Francisco, and a source of reliable information for the region. In a public presentation in January 2015, ²⁰ she identified California as a major site of trafficking within the US, and reported that the trafficked here are overwhelmingly young, often between fourteen and sixteen years old. She said about 85% have experienced child abuse or incest before they were trafficked; 80% come originally from other countries, and speak 41 languages. Her office is directly tied to the District Attorney's office—in fact, she works for the current DA, George Gascón. I began to understand that getting support services in California almost always involves law enforcement.

Women are trafficked in California in a variety of ways. A number of young women are recruited by traffickers when they run away from abusive families or other family difficulties and are living on the streets. Others are seduced by older men who become "boyfriends" and leave home to follow them, eventually finding themselves sold into sex work and unable to leave. Women who have been trafficked from Mexico or other countries are often brought to California by members of their family or the family's associates. All of these circumstances complicate the issues of coercion and consent in the legal definitions of trafficking, and can complicate motivations to leave the forced labor situation, and also to prosecute the traffickers.

In her briefing, Rodriguez spoke about a special kind of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that survivors of trafficking undergo. 21 She connected the experiences of trafficked women to a chain of abuse in their lives. "Trafficked persons, especially those sexually exploited, usually have repeated and overlapping experiences of trauma, sometimes for years, which need unique and specific approaches to healing." This disorder does not follow the etiology of soldiers with PTSD, who often have a circumscribed period of trauma which comes to an end. This helps to explain why many times trafficking victims will return to their abusers. Survivors need sustained support to recover from this kind of PTSD.

Shortly after hearing Rodriguez, I went to the Asian Women's Shelter (AWS) to meet Hediana Utarti, the community projects director. The Asian Women's Shelter is one of the oldest agencies of its kind in San Francisco. It started in 1988 as a domestic violence shelter and at the time one of only three nation-wide that provided language services for Asian women. Over the years, trafficking victims have also become part of its mission. AWS helps between eighty and one hundred clients a year. Sometimes women come with their children and stay at the "safe house" for as long as nine months or a year. Utarti commented that a number of clients return to their former lives, and explains that she has followed some clients over a number of years. The agency provides shelter in a secret location, runs a crisis line, takes clients to get medical treatments, translates, interprets in court or in police situations, arranges therapy, and a variety of other healing practices—what is called "case management" in the field of social services. They have a small full and part-time staff, and eighteen volunteer staff speak fourteen languages.

The AWS describes itself as "survivor centered." This has implications for the way they operate and how they approach their work. Alive to all the nuances and entailments of

language, Utarti told me that at AWS they do not claim to "save" or "rescue" their clients; they "assist" them. They do use the language of victimization and exploitation, but also of agency and choice. The goal is to acknowledge the full personhood of the survivor, recognizing both the victimized aspects of their experiences but also their full human abilities to develop and implement their own plans for safety, care, and action. Utarti said that when clients are too afraid to press charges or decide not to because of ties to family members who trafficked them (not an uncommon scenario), her staff accepts these decisions as the client's choice. She told me of one young girl who was trafficked from Mexico to Los Angeles by a relative. She lived as a sex worker for several years, suffering abuse and violence and fearing for her life. However, during this time, she was part of a closely knit group of tightly controlled girls, and became a member of a gang. She finally managed to escape and came to San Francisco, to the AWS. She cooperated with law enforcement in bringing charges against her traffickers, and was relocated and supported in her recovery. However, she was terribly lonely, missing Los Angeles, friends, and family. She knew if she went back, she would put her life in danger of retaliation, but after a long period in the north, she decided to return. Utarti said it was very painful to see her make this decision, and she did everything she could to advise against it and to provide all the support AWS could offer. Finally, however, she had to accept the girl's decision. This example was offered as a glimpse into the realities of the difficulties of survivors and the "two-steps-forward, one-step-back" dance of providing hands-on help to trafficking victims (cf. Estrada Fuentes' interview with Sohini Chakraborty for comparison to India).

In speaking with Utarti, I learned about other agencies in San Francisco working with trafficking clients. She told me, for example, about city-wide efforts to develop some special programs for trans youth because they are particularly susceptible to abuse and violence (this conversation occurring as trans rights was becoming a visible national issue, and one year before the North Carolina "Bathroom law" ignited public debate in spring 2016).²² Huckleberry House serves a large LGBT population in San Francisco, large because young people often run away from their abusive situations to seek a new life in supposedly liberal San Francisco. St. James Infirmary was started in 1999 as an occupational health and safety clinic for sex workers, and is named after Margo St. James, the San Francisco sex worker who founded COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), the first labor organization for sex workers in San Francisco in 1973. It is now also a resource for trafficked persons providing legal aid, mental health services, and support groups as well as medical services. (Importantly, it also demonstrates that supporters of sex workers can also support trafficking survivors without ideological contradictions.)

In the city of San Francisco, the police department and the judicial system through the District Attorney's office are implicated in most efforts to provide support services to victims. The Asian Women's Shelter gets most of its referrals from the Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach group—and they work closely with the DA's office and the San Francisco Police Department. Often clients first approach legal aid organizations for help rather than law enforcement or other agencies, when, for example, it is a question of whether or not they can be protected under the law. It is almost impossible for a trafficking client to get help without becoming involved in the legal and law enforcement agencies of the state. Even in the shelters, the law requires reporting of clients. To get T-visas, special visas giving trafficked persons permission to stay in the US, cooperation with the District Attorney's office is required. For many, this is a frightening connection, one that may discourage them from seeking assistance. In addition, many anecdotal tales circulate of people taken into custody by the police in a raid, and then deported back to their country of origin whether this is safe for these victims or not. No wonder clients are afraid to come forward and ask for help if they may be imprisoned and deported.

The San Francisco Police Department has a stated policy of not arresting prostitutes (although prostitution is against the law), but does take people into custody when involved in a raid or other anti-trafficking operations. Sage, a survivor services NGO in San Francisco, now defunct, $\frac{23}{10}$ had successfully worked with the police department to train officers to take women into custody without using hand cuffs or referring to them as prostitutes. This accomplishment remains in place according to the District Attorney George Gascón.²⁴ It is difficult to know whether to see San Francisco law enforcement as exceptional or standard practice, or whether officers really follow this protocol. In the past year, the SF police department has suffered two texting scandals in which officers have been revealed texting racist, sexist, and homophobic remarks to each other, and just as I was finishing this article, two San Francisco police officers were under investigation for possible connections to a (neighboring) Oakland Police Department sex trafficking scandal. 25 Certainly elsewhere, the relationships between police and sex workers, including the trafficked, have been documented as hostile and violent. In a New York survey conducted by the Sex Workers Project, 30% of sex workers interviewed who worked on the street told researchers that they had been threatened with violence by police officers, while 27% actually experienced violence at the hands of police. In a similar survey, for those working indoors, 14% of sex workers reported police had been violent toward them, and 16% reported police initiated a sexual interaction. 26

The Role of the Arts

I asked Hediana Utarti whether AWS used any performance-based activities as part of their support programs with clients, and told her about Sanved, the dance movement therapy program in Kolkata, described elsewhere in this issue (see <u>Sarkar Munsi's essay</u>, and the <u>Chakraborty interview</u>, <u>Estrada-Fuentes's journal</u>, and the <u>annotated Sanved presentation in the "Appendix."</u>) She said they had nothing formal, but that sometimes in the evenings, after long days with lawyers, or in court, or at medical clinics, she and the clients staying at the shelter put on music and danced, or "some of them may simply move. It feels good, for the girls and for me too," she smiled.

Some months later and closer to home, I became aware of ARM of Care, a small NGO that works specifically with art-based programs to help women and girls who are survivors of violence and trafficking. In Contra Costa County where I live, the community has only recently begun to be aware of local trafficking. Largely occupied by an upper-middle class population living in a prosperous bedroom community, it has not been a highly visible space of trafficking. However, according to Contra Costa County Prosecutor Nancy Georgiou "since January 2011, the problem of trafficking started to become more and more obvious. In 2011 she had four cases to review, and in 2013, thirty-two cases." In 2015, in the neighboring city of Danville, police broke up a trafficking ring of three people who had been capturing women, raping them, and forcing them into prostitution for over fourteen years.

ARM of Care was founded in 2012 by Amy Lynch. The organization operates without state support, and funds its work through donations and grants. They offer programs to other social service agencies working with sexually exploited youth, or are approached by the agencies to partner. Typically, the agencies do not pay ARM of Care: sometimes an agency will submit a grant proposal with ARM written into the proposal—this has happened three times, but none of them were successful. The acronym ARM stands for art, recreation, and movement, the main strategies employed by the organization to address "healing, restoration and empowerment to those who have experienced trauma." To date, they have worked with eight different agencies who work with sexually exploited youth. Some of these are faith-based and while ARM of Care is not

affiliated to any religious group or denomination, they are faith-friendly, and employ religious elements within some of their programs (example below).

Lynch has degrees in Somatic Movement Education and Recreational Therapy, and has worked for over thirty years with these skills serving a variety of populations. ³⁰ The staff also consists of a theatre specialist, a visual arts specialist, and a director of administration. Lynch and her small band have started their grass-rooted organization with the support of a local Board of Directors made up of concerned citizens, educators, and professionals. The <u>slideshow ARM uses</u> to educate public groups provides examples of several of the projects they have designed for clients, including "body mapping," sewing and crafts, movement workshops, and cultural events for which tickets have been donated.

In one extended project, ARM took eighteen young clients to a local theatre production of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.* Before the performance, staff conducted a workshop based on a bible text (Ephesians 6:10-18) that counsels, in part, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." Staff led movement exercises connecting some symbols from this text used by characters in the play to protect themselves and the young women's own bodies. In a follow-up art module, they were asked to design their own wardrobes in response to the prompt, "What do you wear, or put on, every morning to prepare for the day?"



An example of wardrobes designed to link to the text and the play. Photo credit: ARM of Care.



Another example of wardrobes designed to link to the text and the play. Photo credit: ARM of Care.

After the play, they discussed the performance over lunch, and at the end of the day, they each received a gift bag with a copy of the original book, a stuffed lion, and some Turkish delight (which features in the novel/play). This kind of project is tailored for the particular population of survivors that ARM is working with, depending on the organization it supports, and the ages and situations of the clients.

Although this example and other projects ARM carries out may seem very simple and concrete, ARM does an excellent job of explaining the links between creativity and healing. For example, a recent newsletter (July 2016), describes this connection:

We also provided a program [...] on what it felt like to be a woman. The girls did a brain map where they shared words of qualities and experiences. Our movements connected with our bodies and femininity, and then they drew about what they were thinking and feeling. One of the women arrived that morning at this facility for the first time in the middle of the program. She sat down with us in time to do the movement exercise and draw with us. To be in a new environment and out of reach of her perpetrator was relieving for her, but being in a place where you don't know anyone was also scary. Trauma has been part of what she has known for way too long. What she shared of her story through her words and drawing rattled us. 33

On that first day of being rescued, she drew a picture of herself with a patch of yellow and a huge hand (see http://armofcare.net/anablepo/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ARM-of-Care-Newsletter 3.1-Summer-2016.pdf). The newsletter notes of the image, "The yellow at the bottom is her child, which she shared is the only bright spot in her life. The hand is of her pimp who had control over her body." Two weeks later, after she had participated in group dance, she was able to say, "The parts of me that I negatively associate with from my trafficking experience now move, and I see it as freedom to move and to use those parts for freedom. For me to use my body for ME and NOT on demand for someone else." 34

Slowly, the elusive subject, the missing person, the trafficked survivor begins to emerge from a compilation of what we can learn about the big picture and from the embodied lived experiences of victims/survivors. The constraints on self-representation are formidable, and any representations by others must be ethical and protective of their identities and vulnerabilities. I began with Jenny Edkins emphasizing that the "who"

emerges in a relationality which often exists beyond the regimes of public visibility, and have tried to traverse the geography of the "what" while providing glimpses into the "who." ARM gives a glimpse into the relationality that can exist in situations of support and therapeutic practices. To conclude, I turn to a formal performance designed for the public sphere which features self-representation in an effective attempt to educate and to activate others.

In 2012, Proposition 35 on the California state ballot called for strengthening California laws against trafficking in the following seven ways:

- 1. Higher prison terms for human traffickers
- 2. Convicted human traffickers would be required to register as sex offenders
- 3. Registered sex offenders would be required to disclose their internet accounts to authorities
- 4. Fines would be increased from traffickers and used to pay for victims' services
- 5. Mandatory human trafficking training for law enforcement officers
- 6. Strengthened victim protection in court proceedings
- 7. Removal of the requirement to prove force to prosecute child sex traffickers. 35

As part of the campaign in favor of Prop 35, an NGO in San Diego, California Against Slavery, produced a series of short videos of "Survivors' Stories" available on their website and on YouTube.com. These solo performances are just over 2 minutes long. Please view the two stories below before continuing with the reading:

There are many issues involved in publicly exposing trafficking survivors in such a manner: Identifying the person by image and name is the first danger. Voyeurism and consumption of their stories as commodities from the safe space of the computer screen is a second. Re-activating trauma by repeating it is a third. In the case of these particular videos, the physical and emotional threats are somewhat—but not, I think, completely—assuaged by the circumstances: the subjects appear to be recovered women who have agreed to make the videos and disclose themselves. The stories are frank but relatively free of melodrama or other inappropriate affect. The narratives can help people understand how coercion

and consent are not unambiguous legal or ethical categories by providing situated experiences. The videos capture agency and activism in the making: these survivors are fighting back as strong women supporting a legal ballot proposition that will improve the lives of others who are being trafficked. They thus model the ability to survive, and indeed to flourish, and to join the political struggle to end trafficking. The ballot proposition passed by 83% of the California electorate and is now law, except for the provision on disclosure of internet accounts, which has been challenged in federal court and found unconstitutional because of violation of free speech rights. This decision is now under appeal, and the rest of the bill's provisions are being implemented. 36

This essay has been dedicated to describing the complexities of the human trafficking phenomenon as it impacts victim/survivors and also the public. I have used a performance studies lens to suggest ways we theatre and performance scholars might contribute to anti-trafficking activism by employing our analytic skills to assess the public discourse around trafficking, and to critique hegemonic distinctions between, for example, coercion and choice. We can also analyze representations of the plight of trafficked victims in public spaces and on media to extend the search for more complex narratives and characterization than currently dominate those spaces. We can analyze and also create performances to see what new imaginaries might be able to evoke survivors' lives and the appropriate ways of enhancing them, leveraging justice in a modest way in our scholarship, artistry, and activism. 37

Notes

- 1. Jenny Edkins, "Temporality, Politics, and Performance: Missing, Displaced,
 Disappeared," in *The Grammar of Politics and Performance*, ed. Shirin Rai and Janelle
 Reinelt (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 145.
- 2. Associated Press (AP), "U.N.: 2.4 million human trafficking victims," *USA Today*, April 3, 2012, accessed July 12, 2016, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2012-04-03/human-trafficking-sex-UN/53982026/1.
- 3. International Labour Organization, "2012 Global Estimate of Forced Labour," accessed July 12, 2016, http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_181953/lang-en/index.htm.
- 4. The International Labour Office, "Profits from Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour," 2014, accessed July 12, 2016, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/ed-norm/-declaration/documents/publication/wcms-243027.pdf. This report presents an increase over the 2005 estimate of \$32 billion.
- 5. A third significant source is the annual report of the US State Department, the "Trafficking in Persons Report." US Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report," July 2015, accessed July 14, 2016, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/245365.pdf. While it does not specifically present a quantification of the problem, it does provide an annual ranking of countries of the world based on their efforts to meet the goals of the UN Protocol. I have not emphasized it because, being a nation-based resource, it is considered by some others outside the US to be an arm of US imperialism. I have cited it below in note 8, where useful illustrations or supporting information might apply.
- 6. UN.GIFT (Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking), "Human Trafficking: The Facts," 2008, accessed July 13, 2016
 https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/labour/Forced_labour/HUMAN_TRAFFICKING https://www.unglobalcompact.org https://www.unglobalcompact.org https://www.unglobalcompact.org https://www.unglobalcompact.org https://www.unglobalcompact.org
- 7. For a good sample of research specifically in the area of evaluating data collection with respect to human trafficking, see Ernesto U. Savona and Sonia Stefanizzi, ed.

- 8. The US Department of State's "Trafficking in Persons Report" comes closest to a global data base. The 2015 version uses the ILO figure of 32 million but does not give a figure or percentage for numbers trafficked for sexual exploitation. Different annual reports highlight a different dimension: in 2015 the report emphasizes the place of trafficking in the global labor supply chain, and singles out extractive industries such as mining to highlight the special connection to sex trafficking. Not only are the miners themselves often trafficked, but women are then provided to them in remote locations for sex: "Sex trafficking related to extractive industries often occurs with impunity. Areas where extraction activities occur may be difficult to access and lack meaningful government presence. Information on victim identification and law enforcement efforts in mining areas can be difficult to obtain or verify. Convictions for sex trafficking related to the extractive industries were lacking in 2014, despite the widespread scope of the problem." US Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report," 19.
- 9. The text of the protocol can be found under its full name: United Nations, "United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime," article 3(a), 2000, accessed July 12, 2016, http://www.osce.org/odihr/19223?download=true.
- 10. CATW is one of the oldest and most powerful international organizations involved in the anti-trafficking movement. It is also one of the strongest "abolitionist" groups. This is clear from its current homepage which features three leading stories attacking efforts to decriminalize prostitution. See http://www.catwinternational.org, accessed July 14, 2016.
- For example, Concerned Women for America and the National Association of Evangelicals.
- 12. Quoted in Erin O'Brien, Sharon Hayes, and Belinda Carpenter, *The Politics of Sex Trafficking: A Moral Geography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 8-9.
- 13. Ibid. 🔁
- 14. Seo-Young Cho, Axel Dreher, and Eric Neumayer, "Does Legalized Prostitution Increase Human Trafficking?" *World Development* 41 (2013): 67-82.
- 15. Ibid., 75-76.
- 16. Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), location 555, Kindle edition.
- 17. Rutvica Andrijasevic, *Migration, Agency and Citizenship in Sex Trafficking* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 6. 2
- 18. Ibid., 2. 🔁
- 19. Ibid., 9. 🔁
- 20. She was keynote speaker at the conference, "Out of the Darkness: Awareness, Protection and Services for Victims of Human Trafficking," sponsored by the San Francisco Mental Health Education Funds (SFHEF).
- 21. See <u>interview with Sohini Chakraborty</u> in this issue for more on the use of Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) in the treatment of PTSD in survivors of sex-trafficking, among other at-risk communities.
- 22. Joe Sterling, Eliott C. McLaughlin, and Joshua Berlinger, "North Carolina, U.S., Square off over Transgender Rights," *CNN*, May 10, 2015, accessed July 18, 2016,

- 23. Sage was the first anti-trafficking service organization I visited when beginning to research this topic in summer of 2013. The program manager Jadma Noronha told me about the police training, and also several other important projects including a "Nordic" style John's School for first offenders, who could attend a session in lieu of prosecution, and an "Early Intervention Prostitution Program" designed to help individuals design and develop plans to "exit the criminal justice system." When I returned a year later, the organization had more or less closed because of fiscal problems—one of the difficult things about small, on the ground programs—they too are fragile, just like their clients but in a different realm.
- 24. Gascón spoke at the "Out of the Darkness" conference cited above.
- 25. Jonah Owen Lamb, "SF Police Investigating Second Officer for Link to Oakland Sex Trafficking Scandal," *San Francisco Examiner*, July 15, 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, http://www.sfexaminer.com/sf-police-investigating-second-officer-link-oakland-sextrafficking-scandal/.
- 26. This research is published by the Sex Workers Project in two reports: "Revolving Door: An Analysis of Street-Based Prostitution in New York City," 2003, accessed July 17, 2016, http://sexworkersproject.org/downloads/RevolvingDoorFS.html; and "Behind Closed Doors: An Analysis of In-door Sex Work in New York City," 2005, accessed July 17, 2016, http://sexworkersproject.org/downloads/BehindClosedDoorsFS.html. See also a more recent report critical of using raids as a tool against human trafficking, "The
 - Use of Raids to Fight Trafficking in Persons," 2009, accessed July 17, 2016, http://sexworkersproject.org/publications/reports/raids-and-trafficking/.
- 27. Darya Esipova, "DA Says Human Trafficking Exists in Contra Costa County," *The Martinez News Gazette*, January 19, 2014, accessed July 17, 2016, http://martinezgazette.com/archives/11146.
- 28. Gary Peterson, "Human Trafficking Ring Busted in Danville," *The Mercury News*, August 26, 2015, accessed July 18, 2016, http://www.mercurynews.com/my-town/ci_28701211/danville-human-trafficking-ring-busted.
- 29. ARM of Care website, accessed July 18, 2016, http://armofcare.net/about.
- 30. Lynch works part time for the Juvenile Hall in Contra Costa County, a maximum-security detention facility for juvenile offenders up to age eighteen. She said an estimated 20% of their charges have been sexually exploited, and that the foster care system in California had 40-80% rates of juvenile sexual exploitation. Also corroborated by a 2012 study reported in the US Department of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau's, "Human Welfare and Human Trafficking Brief," July 2015, accessed July 18, 2016,
 - https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/trafficking.pdf.
- 31. A children's fantasy novel by C.S. Lewis (1950) that has been fashioned into a successful play for the theatre and television by a number of adapters, and into a Disney film in 2005.
- 32. *Holy Bible, New International Version,* accessed July 18, 2016, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206:10-18.
- 33. ARM of Care Newsletter 3 (Summer 2016): 6, accessed July 18, 2016, http://armofcare.net/anablepo/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ARM-of-Care-Newsletter 3.1-Summer-2016.pdf.

- 35. For the details of the bill, see an analysis and summary: Attorney General of California, "Proposition 35: Human Trafficking. Penalties. Initiative Statute.," accessed July 18, 2016, http://vig.cdn.sos.ca.gov/2012/general/pdf/35-title-summanalysis.pdf.
- 36. For more information concerning the history of the suit and the current state of play, see California Against Slavery website, accessed July 18, 2016
 http://www.casre.org/prop-35/lawsuit.
- 37. For more analyses, including critique of three theatrical representations, see Janelle Reinelt, "Is a Trafficked Woman a Citizen? Survival and Citizenship in Performance," in *Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance*, eds. Bishnupriya Dutt, Janelle Reinelt, and Shrinkhla Sahai (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming 2017).

å Bio

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Affective Labors: Love, Care, Solidarity in the Social Reintegration of Female Ex-Combatants in Colombia

María Estrada-Fuentes

ABSTRACT In the Battlefield What can you tell me about love? This question was often followed by a combination of nervous laughter and bitter smiles. Thoughtful silence. As if love could not be part of life in the guerrilla ranks. As if love was not part of everyday life in times of war. Perhaps the former [...]

In the Battlefield

What can you tell me about love?

This question was often followed by a combination of nervous laughter and bitter smiles. Thoughtful silence. As if love could not be part of life in the guerrilla ranks. As if love was not part of everyday life in times of war. Perhaps the former guerrillas I was interviewing thought I was asking about a specific type of romantic love, such as the kind of love stories one learns from popular Mexican, Colombian, and Venezuelan telenovelas. Perhaps they thought my question assumed this prototypical, painful narrative of romantic love was the only possible way for people to experience love. And the answer would go something like this:

Love... it is not like that, not like here. It is different. Back there you just... there is no stability. You have to ask for authorization from the commander, you cannot get involved with someone unless you are serious, then once you have been granted permission you can sleep in the same tent if you have one. Everyone respects that; no one is allowed to start messing around. But you know you can be sent off to a different unit anytime, or your partner can be killed in combat, so you don't get attached. Sometimes you hear that your partner gets involved with someone new. You have to move on, you find someone else. Or you can stay alone if you want to, that's ok too.

I wanted to learn about love, about how people allow themselves to be touched, or not, in the battlefield. I wanted to hear about love in the words of the once tough combatants; to ask about sex and consent, to learn about rape and abortion policies within the Colombian guerrilla ranks without being too intrusive, and the love question helped me: it was vague enough to start an innocent conversation and I could *see*, in their bodily reactions, whether I could follow-up with a relevant discussion. I wanted to ask the questions that would lead to insightful answers, but I had to be careful. I wanted to inquire about different ways and possibilities of understanding and participating in love-based relationships in the context of guerrilla warfare, but I did not want to do away with the layers of protection interviewees—and myself for that matter—might have wanted to use

for cover when talking to a stranger, especially regarding subjects' past involvement in ongoing war. Whether I interviewed men or women, the distinction between *here* and *there* was always present. *There* indicated not only a different place but also a different time, a *past stage* where experiences of romantic love may or may not be possible. *There* people love and protect their partners and comrades during combat; rank-and-file members must learn how to make coffee and cook for hundreds at a time without making noise or producing too much smoke; some are trained to be nurses, surgeons, and are experts at healing each others' wounds. Back *there* some people refuse to execute individuals under risk of punishment, while others are very good and enjoy following those orders.²

Back there, in the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army, hereafter "ELN")³ rank-and-file guerrillas can request permission to have life-partners and children —which can be denied; but in the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, hereafter "FARC"),⁴ they cannot request authorization for having kids—however sometimes they hide their pregnancies and give birth. In the Colombian guerrilla ranks all women, regardless of age, use hormonal contraception—usually injections, and if they get pregnant they must have an abortion every single time; but not all the Colombian guerrilla groups engage with the same disciplinary practices. In the guerrilla ranks all members have equal rights and obligations, but commanders' partners are allowed to have their babies and see their children grow. In the battlefield men and women of all ages are raped, but they also make love.

In this article I am concerned with how affective transactions and related practices of love, care, and solidarity are experienced and thought through by former female combatants who were mostly recruited as children. I propose the concept of "affective labors" to understand female experiences and affective practices within guerrilla organizations. I argue that by focusing on the performativity of human emotions and transactions present in military structures, policymakers and peace-building practitioners could improve the management of human and financial resources and, subsequently, facilitate social reintegration.

With this I intend to contribute narrative possibilities for subjects' existence, and thus pathways for different options to leverage justice for Colombian citizens who have been part of illegal armed organizations and are now subject to reintegration programs. The reiteration of regulatory and affective practices in the guerrillas produce combatant "units" that conform to disciplinary codes and expectations, which draw the limits on what is a viable life within the ranks. In this article I propose that the process of subjectification in the guerrillas and its iterative qualities are similar to that which produce civilians through reintegration programs. I argue that the promise of intelligibility inherent in both guerrilla (illegal) and civilian (legal) performances is also a promise for continued existence. In her influential book The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection, Judith Butler argues that the desire to be visible, to be considered worthy and survive, is an exploitative desire. Subjects, she suggests, would prefer to exist in subordination than not exist. Existence is therefore not limited to subjects' intelligibility; it also implicates the possibility of death. She writes, "The one who holds out the promise of continued existence plays to the desire to survive" and as such, performances of subjection through affective labors—however destructive these may be—are also a means to make one's life a life that qualifies as one worth living. 2

Love Labor: Primary Care and Retention Practices in the Guerrilla Ranks

Most times my love-question was interpreted as an inquiry about romantic love, but my interest was not solely on the latter: enquiring about the ways in which combatants experience love and engage in love-labor gives us an insight into the ways in which they conceive and experience care, attachment to others, and participate in practices of solidarity before, during, and after enlistment. Scott Gates emphasizes the need to understand the differences between recruitment motivations, retention in the armed group, and related practices of socialization. He suggests that by working towards a better understanding of retention processes instead of solely focusing on motivations and drivers at recruitment, we may find critical information that can assist in the effective design of reintegration programs. In my work I consider that the affective dimensions of warfare are not only helpful but also crucial in identifying and understanding the needs of citizens who have been part of illegal armed organizations and are now trying to re-build their lives in civilian contexts. A comprehensive approach to affect in recruitment, retention, and defection/disassociation provides important information in the design and implementation of relevant reintegration assistance.

In their study of the production of affective equality and inequality within social systems and practices of care, Kathleen Lynch and Judy Walsh provide a distinction between three different types of other-centered work required to sustain primary, secondary, and tertiary care relations. In order to maintain secondary and tertiary care relations, general care-work and solidarity-work are required. Primary care relations, the authors argue, are not sustainable over time without love-labor. "Without such labouring, feelings of love or care for others can simply involve rhetorical functionings, words and talk that are declaratory in nature but lack substance in practice or action." Primary care or love relations:

refer to relations of high interdependency that arise from inherited or chosen dependencies or interdependencies and are our primary care relations. Love labouring is the work required to sustain these relations...is *emotionally engaged* work that has as its principal goal the survival, development and/or well-being of the other. There is an intense sense of *belongingness* and *trust* in primary care relations when they are positive, and of distrust and isolation when they are neglectful, exploitative or abusive that does not hold for other care relations [emphasis in original]. 11

The authors indicate that the most obvious type of love care-relationship is that which exists between parents and children: it is essential for survival, has the potential of being mutually beneficial and is characterized by marginal or non-existent immediate gain for the carer. 12

Guerrilla combatants are not entirely deprived of love and care, or primary care, or love relationships: they are part of networks of affect and solidarity that provide support and generate a strong sense of belonging, sometimes deep trust, but that also make them extremely vulnerable. Whether through experiences of romantic-love, camaraderie, or friendships—what I would like to call affective socialization practices—guerrillas develop emotional attachments characterized by a high sense of interdependency and feelings of familial belonging. Writing about comrades that died during confrontations with the Colombian military, former FARC guerrilla member Zenaida Rueda writes: "They were my brothers, my cousins, my uncles...they were my family. That is what the guerrilla becomes for us: family" 13 ([e] llos eran mis hermanos, mis primos, mis tíos...eran mi familia. Eso se vuelve la guerrilla para uno.) 14 Primary care or love relations also give rise to fear, distrust, and emotional isolation, and the dynamics and possibilities for love and romantic love relationships to flourish depend on other primary-care relationships. During one of

my interviews, when I asked Tatiana $\frac{15}{2}$ about love, this nineteen year-old former FARC member said:

At the beginning, feeling attracted to someone else was beautiful. But as time goes on, they [commanders] make you turn into an aggressive, guarded person, like a cat, because sometimes you try to be with someone and commanders start sending you off somewhere else so you cannot be together, or they do things so you don't get along. And so you become aggressive, wary from others. ...At the end one wouldn't care about being with someone. If he could stick around it was ok and if not it was ok too. One would say "It doesn't matter, there are plenty more men here." In that way, you become like a man. 16 (Al principio, la sensación de atracción a otra persona es muy bonito. Pero a uno lo vuelven como agresivo, como un gato, porque aveces uno trata de atraerse [estar juntos] con esa persona y cuando los comandantes ven que uno está con esa persona comienzan a abrirlo para allá, abrirlo para acá, comienzan a hacerle cualquier cosa para que uno choque. Entonces ya uno se va volviendo agresivo. ...A lo último a uno le valía ya una, discúlpeme la palabra, una pendejada estar con alguien, si él llegaba bien y si no también. Uno decía "No, para eso hay más." Ya uno andaba como hombre.)

M: Did you fall in love there? (¿Y tu te enamoraste allá?)

T: [Nervous laughter] Yes. Once. I had been in the guerrilla for about five years. I fell in love with a comrade I had been with for two years. But a snake bit me, and he was very anxious and worried and the commander didn't like it when a man cared like that for a woman, or the other way around, because they think that they will lose that combatant, that you are going to get bored in the guerrillas, lose morale, and that you will desert. So they sent him off and away from me. I was very sick....He died in combat. I was very hurt. The commanders wouldn't tell me he was dead because they knew I was willing to die for him, and he felt the same. So they lied for a week....I was depressed for seven months, but I could not let them know how I felt. The first day it was ok to show my sadness, but then I had to hide my feelings. They could get the wrong idea, that I wanted to desert, and they could kill me because of this. ([Risa nerviosa] Sí. Una vez. Llevaba por ahí cinco añitos [en la guerrilla], de un compañero con el que llevaba dos años ya viviendo [juntos]. A mi me picó una culebra, y él se desesperó mucho y al comandante no le gusta que un hombre se preocupe así por una mujer, o una mujer [por un hombre] porque piensan que van a perder ese combatiente, el hombre se va a aburrir, se va a ir, se va a desmoralizar. A él lo sacaron de donde yo estaba, porque yo estaba enferma....Murió en una acción. A mi me dio duro. Ellos [los comandantes] no me querían decir a mi porque sabían de que yo daba la vida por él, igualmente él por mi. Entonces a mí me mintieron por una semana....Me dolió mucho, yo estuve siete meses así [triste] pero yo no podía demostrarlo. El primer día, claro, porque los comandantes me entendían. Pero de ahí para allá no podía, porque pensaban que yo me iba a ir [desertar], empezaban a pensar mal de mi, me podían matar.)

Tatiana was one of four siblings, the only female. She was forcibly recruited by the FARC when she was twelve years old by a FARC member who was eight years older and romantically interested in her. Tatiana said that on the first night she was in the guerrilla camp they slept together and that it was very hard for her because she had never slept with anyone else. The thought about leaving the group a few times, during her first years, but she was afraid of doing so and she eventually adapted to life in the guerrillas. When I asked what happened to her recruiter, whom she referred to as her "partner," she

said he was murdered just a month after she joined the group, and that despite what he did to her she was grateful to him because he helped her to adapt quickly and understand the group dynamics. She left the FARC because she was captured by members of the Colombian Military when she was seventeen years old.

Talking about love, trust and care practices, Tatiana described how everyday activities were an opportunity to demonstrate feelings of fondness among friends and partners, such as washing each others' clothes or cleaning their boots. While it is forbidden to help each other in these tasks, guerrillas do so when they want and feel they need to:

We support each other, but commanders don't like that. They say: "Ah, we are losing her, she is in love."...Love there is beautiful because one needs companionship, support, but it is also dangerous for you because of the things you might do to be able to be with that person, or maybe when you realize your partner died, and one feels lonely (Uno se apoya, y a los comandantes no les gusta eso. Ahí dicen: "Ya la estamos perdiendo, ya se enamoró."...El amor allá, a la vez que es bonito, porque uno necesita una compañía, también lo hace correr peligro, porque uno [hace cosas] para estar con esa persona, o que uno sepa que se ha muerto y uno allá se siente solo.)

The physical and emotional effort invested in the survival of oneself and others, in sustaining these primary care relations, is love-labor. "Love labour is generally characterised by relations of strong mutuality; there is a sense of mutual dependence no matter how poor the relationship may be." How does this love-labor affect everyday life and decisions within the guerrilla ranks?

In her autobiography Escrito para no morir: bitácora de una militancia, the anthropologist and former Movimiento 19 de Abril (19th of April Movement, hereafter "M-19") 19 guerrilla member, María Eugenia Vásquez Perdomo, writes that love in the guerrillas was part of their wider, communal political project, not a personal project. Romantic love relationships were intense but transient, because they were limited by their political quest for social change, not individual desires, personal attachments, and expectations: "We loved each other with the intensity that comes with the uncertainty of tomorrow and the trust of being among equals." (nos quisimos con la intensidad que proporciona la incertidumbre frente al mañana y con la confianza de estar entre iguales.) $\frac{21}{2}$ There was little or no investment in building long-term romantic relationships, and instead affective relationships were based on a sense of trust and camaraderie among equals. Sexual encounters among romantic partners were, in the context of the M-19 and according to Vásquez Perdomo, just a way to freely express feelings of closeness to a person with ideological affinity, who was also a member of the guerrilla organization.²² However, in her narrative of life as an university student, and an urban-based guerrilla member during the seventies and eighties, Vásquez Perdomo describes multiple romantic relationships, including two marriages, affective attachments, motherhood, and gendered expectations for sexual and social behaviours, even within the guerrillas. For instance, motherhood in the seventies, during her first marriage to another M-19 guerrilla, turned Vásquez Perdomo into a stay-at-home mother, while her husband continued with his militant activities. "Our partnership had been exhausted by the daily routine and was drowning in contradictions. The discourse about relationships between compañeros was a far cry from the reality." 23 (Nuestro amor se agotaba en la cotidianidad y naufragaba en sus contradicciones. Una cosa era el discurso sobre las relaciones de pareja entre compañeros y otra bien distinta la realidad) $\frac{24}{2}$ she writes, suggesting a clear distinction between discourses of gender and gender equality within militant contexts, and lived experience. She continues:

In spite of the fact that we had both been involved in militant activity since before we lived together, now his work came first. He could do as he would with his time; I had the domestic chores and the baby. At most Ramiro "helped" with some things, and according to a lot of compañero couples, I should have thanked him for his help. I myself thought his job justified his many absences. 25 (Si bien ambos teníamos una actividad militante desde antes de vivir juntos, ahora la que se priorizaba era la suya. Él disponía del tiempo a su amaño, yo tenía las obligaciones domésticas y de crianza; a lo sumo Ramiro me "ayudaba" en algunas tareas y, según muchos compañeros y compañeras, yo debía agradecer su colaboración. Yo misma pensaba que su trabajo justificaba muchas ausencias.)26

Vásquez Perdomo indicates that romantic-love relationships were understood as relationships among equals—entre iguales, however, house management and care-labor were considered female tasks, and the participation of men in these were regarded as acts of kindness, not as routine labor distribution in a relationship *among equals*.

In another section of her autobiography Vásquez Perdomo reflects on the intensity of her experiences of romantic love, bodily reactions and feelings attached to these, and writes about the pain she experienced the last time she saw one of her romantic partners, Alfredo:

When I lost him from sight, I consulted for a moment the measure of his absence, and a dull pain in every fibre of my being revealed the dimension of the emptiness. I wanted to shout, cry and run until I couldn't run anymore. I wanted to somehow deaden the pain, to flee from it, but I stayed right there, outwardly calm, with a commitment that went beyond love. (Cuando lo perdí de vista consulté por un instante la medida de su ausencia y un dolor sordo en cada fibra del cuerpo delató la dimensión del vacío. Habría querido gritar, Ilorar y correr, hasta agotar mis fuerzas, por no sentir, pero me quedé allí aparentemente tranquila, con un compromiso que iba más allá del amor.) (28)

This description of pain in the absence of the other suggests romantic-love relationships and encounters were not so transient, after all. Vásquez Perdomo envisioned a personal project, she desired a present and future life with Alfredo. A few months after the separation she received the news of his death—he was shot in his forehead during combat, and she writes:

Alfredo was my emotional axis. As long as he had lived I had felt the certainty of love: it was both of us against the world. Now he had left me alone. At first the feeling of abandonment assaulted me, and I was angry at the way he'd let himself be killed. (Alfredo constituía mi eje afectivo. Mientras existió, sentía la certeza del amor: estábamos ambos frente al mundo. Ahora me había dejado sola. En un principio me asaltó la sensación de abandono y de rabia con él, por dejarse matar.)

Love, despite Vasquez Perdomo's claims of the communal character of it, was not therefore solely defined by the political goals of the M-19. The death of her partner meant, for her, the death of the possibility for an affective personal project, the termination of a romantic partnership with her comrade still *within their* communal, political project.

Vásquez Perdomo left the M-19 in 1988, a year before the collective demobilization of the M-19 and after eighteen years of service: she talked with her commanders and expressed that she no longer wanted to be part of the organization. She decided to leave

partly because of the sudden death of her eldest son when he was thirteen years old—she had two children with two different partners during her militant years. Her request for disassociation was approved without further complications. Working in the guerrillas was, for her, a means for building a better future for her son while waiting for the possibility of a re-encounter with him. But with his death, the years of sacrifice, absence, and renunciation to be close to him no longer made sense for her. "It seems impossible that so much love could have no future, but there was nothing left, only an intense emptiness." [31] (Parecía mentira que tanto amor se volviera huérfano de futuro.) [32] Despite the urbanbased nature of most of her militant years, her re-adaptation to civilian life was an extremely difficult and painful process as will be further discussed below.

Experiences of absent motherhood or the forced termination of pregnancies often trigger feelings of disillusionment, betrayal, and resentment among the guerrillas. These are illustrative of how important primary care, love relationships, and related labor are in relation to retention possibilities in the armed group. And it is the same for retention in reintegration programs. This was the case for Diana the thirty-year-old woman that I interviewed. Diana was one of six siblings in a single parent household. Her father died when she was six years old and her mother was forced to move to a different city, leaving her children, so she could work and provide for them. She requested enrolment in the guerrillas when she was approximately fifteen years old—she could not recall her exact age, sometime between 1999 and 2000—as she was promised clothes, food, and access to education. Echoing the situation of many others when they join the group, she realized life within the ranks was not easy, and that the initial promises to cover her basic needs were not going to be fulfilled—they never were for her—and she tried to quit, but she was not allowed to leave as enrolment in the FARC is a life-long commitment. Guerrillas who desert the armed group do so risking their lives as, often, the punishment for unsuccessful defection is death. Eventually Diana got used to being a guerrilla. When I asked what were the things she enjoyed the most about her life in the FARC, she said that the feelings of brotherhood and mutual care where the things she liked the most: "It feels as if they were all one person—todos son como una misma persona." But when I asked her about the things that she did not like there she immediately said "almost everything—casi todo," and that she was never happy: "The lack of freedom, waking up at five AM, wearing a wet military uniform, and staying like that all day long, how could I possibly like that?" (La falta de libertad. La vida militar, la vida guerrillera. Levantarse a las 5am y ponerse un camuflado mojado para estar así todo el día. A mí qué me va a gustar eso.) She also said she did not agree with several guerrilla practices, such as selective killings, extortion, kidnapping, and the murdering of innocent people during combat. 33 Despite the difficulties, she found in the FARC a family, companionship, a group of people that, in her view, truly cared for each other. She also had two romantic partners during her years of enlistment, and got pregnant twice. Each time, following the rules of the FARC, she had abortions. In this context of deep feelings of inter-dependence with her comrades and partners, Diana's forced abortions mark significant ruptures for her.

Diana and I had coffee and chocolates during our interview 34 and after some small talk I asked: "How long ago did you desert the guerrillas?" (¿Hace cuánto saliste de la guerrilla?) "I left fifteen months ago. They forced me to have an abortion, and that was the second time." (Hace un año y tres meses. Yo me fui porque me hicieron abortar, esa fue la segunda vez.) After twelve years of service, she was forced to have an abortion three months before her baby was due. She had a stable partner and this was her second pregnancy. In both cases, and following the rules of the FARC, she notified her commander so they could proceed with the mandatory abortions. The first pregnancy was terminated without further complications. But the second time that she informed them about her condition, her warnings were ignored. When she was six months into her pregnancy they decided to

proceed with the abortion, against her will. "When you are six months into your pregnancy, the baby is fully formed. If we had had an incubator there, my baby could have survived. I saw him." (A los seis meses el niño está formado. Si hubiera habido una incubadora allá el niño se hubiera salvado. Yo lo vi.) In our conversation she stated that this was the main reason for her to defect from the guerrillas: after over a decade of service, she was too hurt and disappointed with the way in which the FARC, her family, handled her situation. In her view, commanders were negligent because she followed the rules, she informed them that she was pregnant at an early stage so they could conduct the abortion, but they seemed careless. For her, this was an extremely disappointing and painful experience and she blames her commander for not showing sufficient attention and not addressing her pregnancy warnings in time so the doctors could take care of it. In Diana's view, her commander decided not to honor her willingness to follow FARC's internal regulations regarding pregnancies; and in his failure to act on her announcement without delay, he failed to do his part in order to sustain their care-relationship: there was no effort, on his side, to guarantee her wellbeing. By neglecting her willingness to abort in the first place, consequently abusing her body and emotional attachments to her unborn child, the commander broke Diana's feelings of belongingness, trust, and dependency to the FARC, to her family, and with this he triggered feelings of isolation in her to the point that she chose desertion. But her disappointment had an additional, closely related dimension: the degradation of the guerrilla in the area where she was an active member and the lack of interest of the commanders in the wellbeing of rank-and-file members as seen not only in Diana's abortion, conducted at a late stage and against her will, but also in the lack of basic toiletries, uniforms, and food. She said the commanders were solely interested in money and civilian women. The family she found in the FARC no longer cared for her, their actions did not correspond with their rhetorical claims for fraternity and solidarity in the organization. 35 In addition, the FARC has made public statements which suggest the claims of women like Diana, who indicate they have been subject to forced abortions, are not true. 36

However, not all women combatants experience war in the same way. Their bodies are not all subject to the same types of violence, or to the same love and care practices. For instance, Eugenia requested enrolment in the late-nineties, when she was eleven years old, to escape from a violent household. 37 She liked being in the FARC, a group she also thought of as her family, and she is still grateful to her recruiter for having saved her, in her own words, from her abusive parents.

My family was the FARC because I wanted to run away from abuse in my family. I didn't want to be touched. I didn't want to be hurt. Because I have my body, and I have my scars. My family gave me these scars. How ironic, after all those years of combat I have no scars given by the FARC. (Realmente mi familia fue las FARC porque yo quería huir de mi casa por el maltrato, yo no quería que nadie me tocara, que nadie me maltratara. Porque, por lo menos, yo tengo mi cuerpo, yo tengo marcas, tengo marcas de mi familia. Incluso, imagínate, tengo marcas de mi familia. Qué cosa, que [en] el grupo armado tenía muchos combates y nunca me lo hicieron.)

She refused on several occasions to press charges against her commander for child recruitment. Eugenia was also forced to use hormonal contraception in the form of injections; she was never pregnant. She left the FARC because she was captured by the Colombian Military after five years of enlistment, when she was sixteen years old and doing militia work in a city, not because she wished to leave. She was angry for being captured and forcibly enrolled in the reintegration program for minors, 38 but she had planned to go back to the FARC when she turned eighteen. The main reason for her not to

re-join the guerrillas was because she realized she was pregnant and decided not to go back to the FARC, so she could be a mother. She now thinks that deciding to continue with her unexpected pregnancy and to re-build her life as a civilian were good choices. She is a single mother; she works as a nurse assistant at a clinic for terminal cancer and AIDS patients, and goes to college on a full scholarship. Her main goal in life is to work assisting former combatants in their reintegration processes.

Regarding similar situations, Alejandra, former ELN member, had two children while she was a guerrilla. The armed group supported her during her pregnancies and allowed family visits. Alejandra, just as Diana, joined the guerrillas when she was seventeen or eighteen years old, sometime in the first half of the 1980s, mostly because she was promised financial assistance for her family and access to education—her father worked the land and she had nine siblings. Alejandra also liked weapons. About a week after joining the ELN she wanted to go back to her family, but she was not allowed to. She had to serve in the guerrillas for a minimum of three years before she could request leave. However, when the time came she no longer thought about leaving: the initial promises were not honored, but she had already adapted to her new life as a guerrilla, and she liked it. In addition, after five years of being in the armed group, Alejandra met her life partner. They requested authorization to be together, and two years later they requested permission to have their first child. 39 Her two children were raised by Alejandra's and her partner's family members, in civilian contexts. They could stay in touch and they were also allowed to see each other occasionally. In the ELN contraception is also compulsory, and this armed group does not provide care and support for pregnancies outside of an authorized relationship. When I asked Alejandra about these, she said:

Yes, couples are allowed to have children, but only after three years of being together and if you prove to be in a committed relationship. If you can't prove this, the ELN does not provide care or support for you and your baby.... No one is forced to have abortions, what happens is that if you are not in a committed relationship and you get pregnant, they tell you they will not take care of you during your pregnancy and that when the baby is born, they will not help you to safely relocate the child. (Sí pueden tener hijos, pero allá solo a partir de los tres años, y si es una pareja estable. Pero si no es una pareja estable, no le responden por el bebé.... Allá no obligan a nadie a abortar sino que ya le dicen, si esa persona no es estable [si no tiene una para estable] y queda embarazada antes de tiempo le dicen que ella responde porque allá no le responden por él, no le van a decir a dónde lo ubica o que allá le van a ver [que le van a cuidar] por el bebé.)

Alejandra spent twenty-eight years in the ELN guerrillas; she was a surgeon and said life was good there, that she had all the basic needs satisfied:

My life was good there because, firstly, I did not have to worry in case I needed something, like underwear, or a dress for example. Because in the guerrillas they provide whatever one needs. If you get sick they will spend all the money that is needed for you to get better. They have no problem in spending a hundred, two hundred million [Colombian] pesos. 40 Whatever you need, they give it to you. (Yo estaba bien allá porque, a ver, en primer lugar yo no me tenía que preocupar porque yo necesito, digamos, unos interiores, necesito un vestido porque eso sí, allá le dan a uno lo que necesite, si uno se enferma allá le gastan a uno hasta el último peso, allá no les duele gastarle cien, doscientos millones [de pesos colombianos], lo que necesite.)

In spite of that, during our conversation, her description of her situation in the armed group did not correspond with her initial statements of general care and wellbeing. Alejandra told me she left the ELN partly due to the death of her parents, of some close friends in the guerrillas, and because her children repeatedly asked her to desert. Her mother had been sick for months, and she was not allowed to visit her before she died. This situation was extremely painful for her. In addition, she recalled the multiple changes the ELN had been through in the course of the twenty-eight years she was an active member. Among these changes, and echoing the words of Diana, Alejandra also expressed her disillusionment in relation to the commanders, and the internal dynamics of the group. Her commander, she said, was only interested in his own family and his partner, not the wellbeing of the file and rank. An additional issue of real concern for her was the lack of military experience and proper training among new recruits. "Some people there, they don't even know how to disassemble a rifle. What is one supposed to do, say, in the middle of combat, if a bullet gets stuck? You either run, or let the military kill you, or let them capture you, what else are you supposed to do?" (Hay personas allá que no saben ni siquiera desarmar un fusil, entonces dígame usted uno en una pelea [combate] y que un tiro se le trabe y ¿qué hace? Ahí corra o déjese coger o déjese matar, porque qué más.) Learning basic skills for survival and defense in war situations was not part of their lives; therefore her comrades were not capable of taking care of themselves or other groupmembers. There was no guarantee of reciprocal care and protection during combat, in case she really needed it. A turning point for her was to be left alone after combat with four wounded comrades for three months, barely surviving. And so she made her decision and left. "I told myself, God has saved me. He has spared me from much harm. I'm leaving now." (Entonces yo dije no, Diosito me ha salvado, me ha favorecido de muchas cosas. Yo me voy.)

The situation of Susana, also a former ELN member, was quite different. When we met, Susana was pregnant; she was twenty years old. She requested enrolment in the guerrillas when she was sixteen years old. She did so because she was bored and tired of workingshe worked at the coca plantations, collecting leaves. She was a raspachín, like the rest of her family.41 Susana thought that in the guerrillas people did nothing: before enlisting she said she could see members just wandering around, relaxed "It's like, you can always see those people [guerrillas] just hanging out. And I thought 'they are relaxed' and so I want to be relaxed too." (Como uno ve a esa gente que mantiene relajado por ahí, no más así. Yo dije "viven relajados" entonces también yo vivo relajada [yo también quiero vivir relajada].) She very soon regretted her choice: in the guerrillas she had to work much harder than she did when she worked as a raspachín, and she also realized she had to wait for three years before being able to request a leave. But Susana met her life partner just a month after joining the ELN and changed her mind about leaving. This same man was also the father of the child she was pregnant with during our interview; they were still together. Despite having a stable, authorized partner, Susana was forced to have an abortion the first time she got pregnant. The second time she realized she was pregnant, she decided to leave the group to avoid another forced abortion. Her pregnancy coincided with her third year as an ELN member, so she could request leave, which was granted. But, shortly after, the ELN called her back to the ranks. 42 On her return, she was unaware that her commander had negotiated a collective demobilization with the Colombian Military. Her partner, who was still in the group, said he would agree to demobilize only if she was included in the demobilization.

Susana did not want to be in the guerrillas, but she did not want to surrender to the State, vía the Military. Her options, as well as those of other members, were limited: the commander had already submitted a list with full names of the front-members to the Military. Accordingly, their civilian identities were already compromised and criminal

records were in place. She was scared, and she also thought it was un-dignified for them to surrender to their enemy. Part of her ideological indoctrination had taught her that the Colombian government did not help the poor, that instead it exploited the poor, the land workers, and she had experienced this herself, as a civilian. So why should she believe now that the government would help her, a guerrillera? She recalled, for me, what she told her commander when they were discussing the collective demobilization:

[Addressing her commander] When I went through [ideological] school, we were told that the government did not help us as poor. And knowing that the government is exploiting people, why should we go there? That's like begging, for us who are guerrillas. For me, I said, I can't agree with doing something like that [demobilize and surrender]. And other comrades said "this is obvious" we are begging [to the government]. All that ideological indoctrination and we end up begging. ([Hablándole a su comandante] En un tiempo, que pasé escuela, 43 a nosotros no habían dicho que el gobierno a nosotros como pobres no nos ayudaba. Y sabiendo que el gobierno está explotando a la gente, por qué tenemos que nosotros ir allá, eso es como ir a pedirle cacao, nosotros como guerrilleros. Por mi, le dije, yo no estoy de acuerdo que hagamos una cosa de esas [desmovilizarse y entregarse]. Y que más de uno dijo "eso es obvio," eso es ir a pedirle cacao [al gobierno]. Tanta ideología que le meten a uno para uno llegar así [cambió tono de voz e hizo gesto de pedir limosna].)

Our interview took place just a few months after her demobilization.

The situations described in this article echo the experiences of other women and men who have joined the Colombian guerrillas, and provide an insight into structural situations which prove to be strong incentives for enlistment, as potential recruits see in the guerrillas a means to change their lives, and the lives of others for good. In the 1970s, Vásquez Perdomo considered the M-19 was a means for her to promote and achieve social justice; in the 1980s Alejandra saw in the ELN an opportunity to have access to education and provide financial support to her family; in the 1990s Eugenia found in the FARC, an illegal armed organization, protection from family violence; also in the 1990s Zenaida Rueda⁴⁴ was forcibly recruited to the FARC in order to protect her brothers, who had been targeted for recruitment. At the turn of the century, Diana believed the FARC would be her way out of poverty, social abandonment, and that she would be able to study. During the first decade of the 2000s Tatiana, who was forcibly recruited, did not consider the FARC was a means to improve her life but, nevertheless, found in it a way of living that she eventually appreciated and enjoyed; and just a few years ago Susana thought the ELN could offer her a way out of her life as a coca plantation worker, a raspachín, with no other future in sight. For most of these women, the guerrillas were a promise, a possibility to materialize their desires for a better future: social justice, access to education and social mobility, a life where having a rest from daily labor was an option. And while their lives did change, the initial promises were not fulfilled, and thousands of people have been affected by the violent actions of the organizations they once belonged to, both inside and outside the ranks.45

This multiplicity of experiences also gives us an insight into the enormous challenge of social reintegration in Colombia. How does the reintegration assistance address all these experiences and related needs? In this article I have highlighted the varied ways in which female bodies are subject to sexual and reproductive rights policies within guerrilla organizations, while I have also addressed how affective transactions and expectations, the love-labor associated with the implementation of these policies and other affective socialization practices, influence everyday life and decision making in the guerrillas.

The life changes resulting from the decisions of these women in relation to their enrolment in the guerrillas, and in particular to those interviewed, are also indicative of the degree of agency they have, and the risks attached to their decisions. For Diana, the decision to desert was the result of her commanders' lack of care for her wellbeing, manifest in the scarcity of food and uniforms and her forced abortion. While deserting was a way for her to protect herself from further physical and emotional abuse, it also meant that she could be captured in the attempt and probably executed by the FARC. For Eugenia and Susana, exploring motherhood entailed assuming responsibilities for the life of someone else and, in the process, transforming their own lives. But I think that, for most ex-combatants—especially for those who were truly not allowed to have children, motherhood also symbolizes a strong demonstration of agency over their own bodies and a clear rupture with the armed group. Just as Eugenia did, many other women have avoided re-enlistment due to pregnancies. For Alejandra, deserting the guerrillas in her mid-fifties meant leaving behind decades of experience and skills in order to learn how to be a civilian; how to be a productive and competitive, self-sufficient citizen while other working women her age were already planning to retire? Through our interviews and conversations I learned former combatants truly appreciate reintegration assistance, but I also learned that former combatants themselves consider the lack of sensitive disaggregation regarding the design and implementation of reintegration programs ignores nuances and individual needs despite enormous, well intended and absolutely necessary institutional efforts to assist and effectively administer available resources.

Care Labor: Becoming Civilians

In closing this article I would like to go back to María Eugenia Vásquez Perdomo, former M-19 member. In her autobiography, Vásquez Perdomo recalls that her transition to civilian life was a painful process: she did no longer had a group that provided a sense of belonging, support and protection. Family and friends perceived her as a potential threat:

Almost all my acquaintances saw me as a bringer of death, a bearer of this danger because of my status as a wanted woman....I wanted with all my heart to try another path in life, but I was labeled a guerrillera and had the mark of death on my forehead. 46 (Casi todos los conocidos me percibían como una posibilidad de muerte, como una portadora de peligro en mi carácter de perseguida. En esos momentos, con todo el corazón quise ensayar otras opciones de vida, pero estaba etiquetada como guerrillera, con la marca de muerte sobre la frente.) 47

In addition to her experiences of stigmatization, Bogotá, the city where she had been a militant for the M-19 and was now her civilian home, was a constant reminder of the comrades, lovers, and dear friends who died due to the war: the streets, cafés, parks were all part of her personal archaeology of loss. And the city itself was invaded by architectural ruins of confrontations between the M-19 and the Colombian Military. At the time of her disassociation from the armed group there was no social reintegration assistance for individual ex-combatants who decided to dessert and could do so, 49 but she knew and sometimes met with several people who were also going through the same readaptation process she was:

We got together and the memories began to flow. In this way we helped each other analyze the past and begin to create new identities for ourselves. Laughing at ourselves and our own sorrows became the best therapy. Little by little, through listening to each other talk about the difficulties with the day-to-day, a picture of our common problem began to emerge. We knew that we had to proceed from here on out on our own; the group didn't shelter us anymore. But at least we had each other, and these talks helped us feel less alone. We

knew that we were no better or worse than our compas who remained within the M-19, just different. One juntábamos y comenzaba a fluir esa energía pegajosa que nos enredaba en recuerdos y terminaba aportando algunos elementos de análisis, útiles para la individualidad que ahora construíamos. Reírnos de nosotros mismos y nuestras angustias se convertía en la mejor terapia. Poco a poco, mientras alguien comentaba sus dificultades con el día a día y lo dramática que resultaba la cotidianidad más elemental, se iba esbozando una muestra de nuestra problemática común. También hacíamos conciencia de que estábamos condenados a resolverla desde una perspectiva individual. Sin embargo, esas tertulias eran claves para sentirnos menos solos, aunque fuese por momentos. Y entender que no éramos ni mejores ni peores que los demás, simplemente distintos.)

Challenges to civilian adaptation vary from learning how to walk across the street, handling money, learning how to access systems of healthcare and education, solving conflict through conversations to building new affective relationships, among others. For this transition and learning process Vásquez Perdomo did not receive any assistance through reintegration programs. Going back to college to complete her undergraduate studies in anthropology was for her a strategy which helped her cope with change. Writing her dissertation, which later on became her award winning autobiography, was a means to understand her past, how it affected her present, and helped her shape her future. In other words, writing her autobiography to complete the degree provided her with the analytical tools to make sense of her life as a guerrilla and of the changes she was going through as she tried to adapt to civilian life. This academic qualification also increased her social mobility.

Since Vásquez Perdomo's demobilization in 1989, multiple reintegration programs and initiatives have been implemented. Reintegration assistance aims at full economic, political, and social assimilation into civil society for ex-combatants and their families. 52 But reintegration does not only entail securing assimilation, it is a process of transformation, of discovery, and rediscovery of oneself in a place and stage where all previous identity references and practices of belonging are lost. In my research I understand reintegration as a performative process enabled by government institutions, rehearsed and performed in civilian contexts. In this sense, the process of reintegration is simultaneously a performance of transformation and transportation which involves all members of society. 53 Assistance provided for this purpose is a combination of love-labor and secondary care-labor. Lynch and Walsh argue that in secondary care-labor relations carers must identify subjects' needs for care and how these can be met. While secondary care-labor relations "involve care responsibilities and attachments, they do not carry the same depth of feeling or moral obligation (as primary care or love relations do) in terms of meeting dependency needs, especially long-term dependency needs [...] There is a degree of choice and contingency about secondary care relations that does not apply to primary relations." 54 Through a small sample, this article shows the heterogeneous qualities of former female combatants: their personal resources and experiences vary, their ample age-range, the time spent in the guerrillas, the affective dimensions of the multiple stages of their involvement, from recruitment to desertion. 55 Why is affective labor important for reintegration and how does reintegration assistance address all these variables?

When asked about in which ways they think reintegration assistance has helped them in the process of transition and adaptation to civilian life, most interviewees expressed their happiness regarding the possibility of studying. Eugenia, for instance, completed a technical degree to be a nurse assistant thanks to the reintegration program. This has enabled her to work and financially support herself and her child. Tatiana, who at the time

of our interview did not have a job, completed a technical degree on cabinet making. For her the most important thing has been to be able to learn, to "acquire knowledge" through the education and vocational training she has had access to via government reintegration programs. She said reintegration is for her to be able to have the life that she deserves here and not there, to be able to share with people she has not met, with people the FARC might have victimized, and help them. She wants to be a psychologist and she wants to work with former combatants and also provide assistance to other vulnerable communities.

Susana, on the other hand, was having a hard time with her studies. She said she could not do it and that she did not like it. While her dream was to be a nurse, and she was aware that she needed to study to be able to fulfil her desires, she was not very optimistic about her study-skills.

I like [the idea of] studying to be a nurse, but I don't like going to school. I know how to give first aid, but I don't like going to school.... I like doing things, that's the way I learn.... I know that if I see how other people do things I will learn, but I don't want to go to school. That's my main problem. (A mí me gusta mucho estudiar enfermería, pero no me gusta estudiar, ir a la escuela. Yo sé los primeros auxilios, pero no me gusta ir al colegio.... Me gusta hacer, porque yo con mirar aprendo.... Yo sé que yo veo como lo hacen y yo voy a aprender, pero yo no quiero ir a la escuela. Ese es el problema mío.)

This is a common situation among former combatants who have difficulties adapting to academic education: it is easier for them to learn by practice, as this is what they used to do in the armed group. In this sense, they are no different from dancers, who also learn by practice. However, what Susana appreciated the most was the support she received from her personal tutor and the care and guidance provided by her to improve and sustain her romantic relationship, to be more confident about herself, to cope and work through her fears regarding motherhood. She appreciated the kindness of all the staff at the ACR "People are kind here. It seems as if they were all the same person. One feels good." (Todos son sencillos. Parece que fueran todos una sola persona. Aquí uno se siente bien.) Interviewees, with very few exceptions, were overall pleased with face-to-face interactions with ACR members.

Despite the good thoughts and sincere appreciation, interviewees were also very critical about assistance. Eugenia, for instance, recalled the years she was subject to the Colombian Family Institute for Welfare (hereafter ICBF) reintegration program. She said they lived "locked up," like prisoners. (Mantenía uno may encerrado. Como prisioneros.) She said the program did not take into account their own experiences and background and that excessive surveillance, presented as protective measures, was counterproductive in her need to learn how to be independent, to become an adult.

When you leave an institution that has sheltered you, a place where you have been provided food and you find yourself feeling hunger, struggling to get on with things on daily basis, it's very hard. They were very overprotective and with this they failed to teach us, to prepare us to be independent. (Cuando usted sale de un programa donde lo han mantenido a uno, donde le han dado de comer, a salirse a no comer, a enfrentarse [con la cotidianidad] es algo muy duro. Ellos eran muy autoprotectores [sobreprotectores], pero también no lo capacitaban a uno para que uno fuera independiente.) 57

Regarding assistance and training for her to be able to provide for herself and her child, to be a productive, independent citizen, Eugenia mentioned she attended many workshops

and courses that were not compatible with her interests and strengths. She considers these were a waste of time for her, and that the state was wasting valuable resources. According to Eugenia, if her carers at the time had been really invested in identifying her own interests and needs, they would have been more efficient in delivering secondary-care assistance. Eleven years had gone by since her demobilization and she thinks that if she had been provided qualitative care, more opportunities and help to discover who she was, what her strengths were, instead of being subject to quantitative policy implementation, she would have graduated from college already. Tatiana had a similar experience also while she was subject to ICBF care: she was initially enrolled on a cosmetology course she did not like. She purposely avoided attending until she failed to complete this training. She then moved on to a cabinet-making course which she finished. Thoughtful consideration and planning from her carers, and more dialogue with her could result in efficient management of available resources.

Eugenia's claims for the importance of more personalized assistance are evident considering the vast multiplicity of persons who are subject to reintegration. To further discuss the affective-importance of personalized assistance I will now focus on Alejandra and Diana. 59 Alejandra deserted the ELN after twenty-eight years of service; she was a surgeon in the ELN and has over two decades of experience in healthcare, from minor ailments to war-related injuries. She is in her mid-fifties, unemployed, and is not happy about the reintegration assistance. Despite her skills and advanced age (in relation to Susana for instance, who was at a similar stage in her reintegration route), Alejandra has to fulfill the same requirements as all other persons in the process of reintegration: she has to finish her primary and secondary education before she can apply for college or to obtain a technical degree and be competitive in the job market. At the time of our interview, the ACR had no system in place to take advantage of former combatants' skills and experiences in order to grant degrees to individuals who can prove they are sufficiently trained and experienced in a particular area. 60 Alejandra has decades of experience; Susana also had knowledge and experience in providing first aid care and assistance. But the skills and expertise of these women, which are relevant and could potentially reduce costs in their respective reintegration routes, are not accepted in civilian contexts. Alejandra thinks studying is important, but she is more concerned about finding a job that helps her to be independent, to feel useful and provide for herself. She was more interested in being able to work and earn a living by legal means. Her monthly stipend, she argued, was not enough to pay her rent, transportation and food. 61 She admitted the only reason she attended school and the mandatory ACR workshops and tutoring meetings was because she received a stipend. But if she had a job, she wouldn't bother going back to the ACR. In this sense, the ACR was not providing enough incentives and appropriate care to secure her willful retention, other than judicial and legal benefits.62

Diana, who deserted the FARC, was depressed and did not receive help to overcome her pain, to mourn the loss of her child, and her family. She was a file-and-rank member, who did not learn any particular skills that could make her employable. When I asked what were the things the ACR provided her with, she mentioned the stipend, education, and psychosocial assistance. The latter consisted of monthly, group meetings. Despite being diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Diana told me that she did not receive additional assistance, other than the group counseling. In these sessions they talked about what it means to be a *civilized* person—thus implying guerrillas are "barbarians," they watched films, they shared stories aimed at increasing their confidence in the reintegration process. She did not find these were helpful for her. 63 Diana has recurrent nightmares related to the FARC, and she mentioned these decreased and she felt better in general while she attended a three-month yoga workshop provided by the

ACR. 64 The course ended, and despite the evidence of benefit to participants, these workshops were discontinued. We talked about job possibilities, about how the ACR was preparing her for the job market, and what type of jobs she thought she could be good at. She said she could work as a cleaner, that she could be a good cook, and that she enjoyed taking care of others, especially children and the elderly. Anything, except office jobs, she said. "I don't know anything about computers." (Eso de sistemas uno no sabe.) But, according to her, the ACR did not help her to get a job and she did not even know how to prepare a resume—hoja de vida—or an application. When I asked Diana what she thought reintegration is and what she needs to reintegrate to society, she said reintegration is synonym of being a good person, "ser una persona de bien," and that all she needs to be able to reintegrate is to stay away from weapons and not go back to the armed group, "dejar las armas, no volver al grupo." It all sounds very good, very sweet and gentle, but being a good person and avoiding recidivism does not make her employable. It does not help her learn socialization skills. It does not help her cope with her loss, to learn how to breathe, get out of bed and keep going when her pain and sadness take over her days. It does not enable her to get a job and earn a living.

Affective labors are central aspects of recruitment, retention, and reintegration. Desires for more dignifying living and survival motivate people to enroll, remain, or defect from armed organizations. These same desires and expectations are also important in the process of learning how to become a civilian, and as such should be taken into account in designing reintegration assistance. But such considerations must go beyond declarations or the production of reports and documents, which are not translated to concrete action. If a Colombian citizen involved in illegal activities decides to leave the armed organization she belongs to, the promised assistance for her to be able to build a new life in civilian contexts must correspond to the needs for care of these subjects of reintegration. The challenge requires an enormous creative effort: former combatants need relevant, useful, qualitative assistance in the process of re-discovering themselves in civilian contexts. Former combatants need to re-create themselves in order to be able to be functioning persons. In this article, I have focused on the affective labors of citizens' involvement in warfare in order to expand ex-combatants' narrative-possibilities for existence. This is an attempt to contribute to fulfil the promise of intelligibility and highlight the importance of qualitative reintegration assistance in the transition from combatant to civilian identities. But it is not only them, ex-combatants, the ones who need to undergo a transformation: civilians are also subjects of reintegration. Civilians must be willing to realize that former combatants are part of everyday life: some of them work in restaurants, hospitals, banks, and supermarkets while others are trying to understand how to move on with their lives. Others fail in their attempt to adapt to their new contexts: they go back to the armed groups or they are murdered in the adjustment process. Civilians must be willing to realize that ex-combatants are also Colombian citizens. They must allow themselves ourselves—to listen to those who have built their lives while waging war. We must be willing to listen and address the needs of those who have lived, lost, and loved in the battlefield.

Notes

1. The interviews selected for this article were conducted in 2014, in multiple cities in Colombia (Bogotá, Cali, Medellín). Some of these semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted thanks to the generous support of the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (ACR) and the Peace and Reconciliation Program (PPR). The ACR is the government institution that designs and implements public policy on reintegration for adults. The PPR is an education institution which implements a basic primary and secondary education program tailored for ex-combatants,

members of communities vulnerable to violence, and victims of the armed conflict. Interviews were also conducted in participants' homes, over several visits. In these cases, contact was established directly with potential interviewees, and not through the above-mentioned institutions. The purpose of approaching potential participants through various routes was to collect information in locations where interviewees felt most comfortable, outside of government-run institutions, thus enabling them to express opinions more freely. The names of participants have been changed and the specific dates and locations where interviews were conducted are not disclosed in order to protect their identities. Opinions expressed in this article are the author's responsibility and do not reflect those of the abovementioned institutions, my co-editor or this journal.

- 2. In my conversations, the examples for punishment for refusing to follow orders, including selective-execution orders, varied: from having to work in the kitchen (ranchar) more often, collect wood, dig trenches, to being murdered. The memory of the brutality and fear of being punished was present in our conversations, but former guerrillas clearly explained that, despite all the violence that characterizes most disciplining technologies within the ranks, there is a strict procedure to establish which kind of punishment corresponds to each violation. Accordingly, these were not arbitrary—even if it may be perceived like that. While, during enrollment interviewees could not express their opinions or discontent, now they could say what they really thought about this system, for instance that it was not a good, fair one; that it did not contribute to their personal growth. In my conversations people wanted me to really understand that there was an order to life in the ranks with clear rules and steps that they knew about and, for multiple reasons from avoiding extra work to diminishing the risks of being murdered, decided to follow. But even with all precautions, sometimes combatants were punished or executed with no apparent reason. 🔁
- 3. The ELN was founded in 1964. This group is rooted in the Liberal guerrilla movements of the first half of the Twentieth century and was deeply influenced by the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the success of the rebels of the Sierra Maestra. Initially comprised mostly of students, members of workers' unions, and intellectuals, this group was also influenced by the thought and work of Marxist-Christians in an early stage of the Theology of Liberation. This group has participated in several peace dialogues with the Colombian government since the 1980s.

 Dissident factions of the ELN demobilized during the 1990s. This group is still active and is the second largest guerrilla organization in the Americas.
- 4. The FARC are rooted in Liberal guerrilla movements of the first half of the Twentieth century, and were officially founded also in 1964. This guerrilla organization was initially comprised mostly by agricultural workers, their cooperatives, and was supported by the Communist party. Since the 1980s the FARC has engaged in peace dialogues with the Colombian government. The FARC is the largest guerrilla organization of the Americas. Since September 2012 and to the time of this writing (Summer 2016), it has been in peace dialogues with the government of President Juan Manuel Santos. On June 23, 2016, the final ceasefire agreement was signed in Havana, Cuba.
- 5. While childhood and experiences of childhood vary significantly according to cultural contexts, in this article a child is understood as any person below the age of eighteen and a child soldier is any person under eighteen years of age associated to an armed organizations, in any capacity. See Sunkanya Podder, "Neither Child nor Soldiers: Contested Terrains in Identity," in *Child Soldiers: From Recruitment to Reintegration*, eds. Alpaslan Ozerdem and Sukanya Podder (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Michael G. Wessells, *Child Soldiers: From Violence to*

Protection (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009). The recruitment of children is considered a war crime. See UNICEF, "Cape Town Principles and Best Practices" (Cape Town: UNICEF, 1997).

- 6. Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1997), 7.
- 7. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xiii, xxiv.; Judith Butler, "Violence, Mourning, Politics," in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London; New York: Verso, 2004).
- 8. Scott Gates, "Why Do Children Fight? Motivations and the Mode of Recruitment," in *Child Soldiers: From Recruitment to Reintegration*, eds. Alpaslan Ozerdem and Sukanya Podder (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 30.
- 9. I developed an initial insight of the affective worlds and affective labor of former combatants and reintegration assistance while working on arts-based reintegration programs and initiatives in Colombia between 2011 and 2012.
- 10. Kathleen Lynch and Judy Walsh, "Love, Care and Solidarity: What Is and Is Not Commodifiable," ed. Kathleen Lynch, John Baker, and Maureen Lyons (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 36.
- 11. Ibid., 42. 🔁
- 12. Ibid., 44. 🔁
- 13. All translations in this text are mine, unless otherwise stated.
- 14. Zenaida Rueda Calderón, *Confesiones De Una Guerrillera. Los Secretos De Tirofijo, Jojoy Ya Las Farc, Revelados Por Primera Vez.* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2009), 104.
- 15. Participation in this study was on voluntary basis, there was no payment announced or made. I am deeply grateful for the generosity and kindness of interviewees and members of staff, who provided logistic support. For the purposes of this article I limited the analysis to five out of a total of thirty-two semi-structured in-depth interviews. Accordingly, findings and conclusions are also informed by my larger research. All the names of interviewees have been changed, and the specific cities where each interview was conducted, and dates, are not disclosed in order to protect participants' identities.
- 16. Tatiana's wording here is related to cultural understandings of masculinity, suggesting men are not interested in engaging in long-term, romantic, or affective relationships.
- 17. The wording she used in Spanish was "dormimos juntos," which could mean they slept in the same tent, but it does not imply that they had sexual intercourse. But her following words, indicating she had never slept with anyone before, suggest she was forced to have sex with him, that she was raped. The words chosen by interviewees and the speed with which they spoke, along with their posture, gestures and movements helped me understand many things which were unspoken. Tatiana did not say she was raped, this is my own interpretation.
- 18. Lynch and Walsh, "Love, Care and Solidarity," 44. 2
- 19. The M-19 emerged in 1973 in response to fraud on the 1970 presidential elections. It was comprised of students, dissidents of other guerrillas, and members of the middle and working class. Since its beginnings, M-19 gained broad following and popularity due to their unusual military tactics and humorous interventions in the public sphere. Its popularity was seriously damaged in the 1980s due to various violent attacks on government institutions and civilian populations. Also in the 1980s, this guerrilla group participated in multiple peace dialogues with two

different governments, demobilized in 1989 and signed the final peace agreement in 1990.

- 20. Maria Eugenia Vasquez Perdomo, *My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary: Reflections of a Former Guerrilla*, trans. Lorena Terando (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 76.
- 21. Maria Eugenia Vasquez Perdomo, *Escrito Para No Morir: Bitácora De Una Militancia* (Colombia: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000), 145.
- 22. Ibid., 145-6. 2
- 23. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 62.
- 24. Vasquez Perdomo, Escrito Para No Morir, 121. 🔁
- 25. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 62.
- 26. Vasquez Perdomo, *Escrito Para No Morir*, 121-22.
- 27. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 187. 🔁
- 28. Vasquez Perdomo, Escrito Para No Morir, 336.
- 29. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 196. 🔁
- 30. Vasquez Perdomo, Escrito Para No Morir, 351. 2
- 31. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 230.
- 32. Vasquez Perdomo, Escrito Para No Morir, 410. 🔁
- 33. I have elsewhere discussed the ideological dimensions of guerrilla warfare. For more on commanders' ideological discourses and the views and experiences of rank-and-file guerrilla members see María Estrada-Fuentes, "Becoming Citizens: Loss and Desire in the Social Reintegration of Guerrilla Ex-Combatants in Colombia," in *Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance*, eds. Bishnupriya Dutt, Janelle Reinelt, and Shrinkhla Sahai (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), forthcoming.
- 34. All interviews conducted in institutional settings took place over food: coffee or tea and snacks, such as cookies or chocolates, provided by me or the institution I was visiting. During the days of institutional-based interviews I carried pens, color pencils, and notebooks with me. I provided these once the interview had finished, as a gesture of gratitude and appreciation. I gave pens and/or notebooks often, and I gave the color pencils to interviewees who had children who would appreciate them. When I was invited to conduct interviews over several house visits, lunch or breakfast and morning or afternoon snacks were prepared. In these cases we cooked together (not that I was allowed to do much!) and we went to the shops together. In some occasions I was allowed to pay for some of the produce.
- 35. FARC, "Estatuto Farc-Ep," (Colombia: Novena Conferencia FARC-EP, 2007), 14. 🔁
- 36. Secretariado del estado Mayor de las FARC-EP, "Las Guerrilleras Son Mujeres Revolucionarias, Conscientes Y Libres," *Mujer Fariana*, January 2, 2016, accessed October 2, 2016, http://www.mujerfariana.org/vision/declaraciones/466-las-guerrilleras-son-mujeres-revolucionarias-conscientes-y-libres.html? tmpl=component&print=1&layout.
- 37. Eugenia was rejected the first time she requested to join the FARC because she was too young. When she requested to be a member for the second time, she lied about her age and said that she was 15 years old, the minimum required age for FARC recruitment. She joined the FARC with her aunt, who died during a combat just a few months later.
- 38. The Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar—Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, hereafter ICBF—is the government institution that designs and implements public policy on reintegration for persons under the age of eighteen. When coming of

age, persons in the process of reintegration who were subject to the ICBF can decide whether the continue with the ACR or not.

- 39. Alejandra said there is a minimum time requirement of three years in a relationship before being able to request authorization to have children. But they were both veteran guerrillas, with good records so an exception was made.
- 40. Approximately US \$35,000 to \$70,000 in October 2016. 2
- 41. Raspachín is a colloquial term in Colombia to refer to coca plantation workers whose main duty is to collect the leaves.
- 42. When leave requests are approved, former ELN members are part of a "military reserve" and can be called back to duty anytime.

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- 43. Escuela refers here to ideological education and indoctrination. 2
- 44. See above. 2

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- 45. I have elsewhere discussed the cycles of promise and desire former combatants go through before, during and after their association with the guerrillas. Estrada-Fuentes, "Becoming Citizens."
- 46. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 232. 2
- 47. Vasquez Perdomo, Escrito Para No Morir, 417. 🔁
- 48. On November 6th and 7th, 1985 the M-19 guerrillas besieged the Palace of Justice, house of the Colombian Supreme Court of Justice. During the operation, the guerrillas held hostage the Magistrates of the Supreme court, employees and other civilians. The counter-siege intervention of the Colombian Military and resulting confrontations with the guerrillas resulted in the complete destruction of the building. Over a hundred people died, among employees, guerrillas, and other civilians. Students, guerrillas, and civilians that were rescued from the building were later tortured or murdered by members of the Colombian Military, and eleven persons were disappeared. The Colombian Palace of Justice was still in ruins, awaiting reconstruction, in 1989.
- 49. Since 1994, combatants who, individually, choose to desert the guerrillas can receive legal benefits and reintegration assistance.

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- 50. Vasquez Perdomo, My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary, 240. 🔁
- 51. Vasquez Perdomo, Escrito Para No Morir, 432. 🔁
- 52. Anders Nilsson, *Reintegrating Ex-Combatants in Post-Conflict Societies* (Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), 2005), 4, 29.
- 53. Richard Schechner, "Performers and Spectators Transported and Transformed," *The Kenyon Review* 3, no. 4 (1981), 91. ▶
- 54. Kathleen Lynch, John Baker, and Maureen Lyons, *Affective Equality: Love, Care and Injustice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 43-46.
- 55. In 2014, when these interviews were conducted, there were 30,612 former combatants subject to the ACR reintegration program. For up-to-date date on the number of ex-combatants enrolled in the ACR reintegration program see www.reintegracion.gov.co
- 56. Martha Graham, "I Am a Dancer," in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed.

 Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 95.
- 57. For more on how reintegration assistance for former child soldiers ignores the real needs of beneficiaries, see Steven A. Zyck, "'But I'm a Man': The Imposition of Childhood on and Denial of Identity and Economic Oportunity to Afghanistan's Child Soldiers," in *Child Soldiers: From Recruitment to Reintegration*, eds. Alpaslan Ozerdem and Sukanya Podder (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 163-168.

- 58. While, for Eugenia, being a nurse assistant has provided her with the improvement of her social mobility, I do not have enough information to say whether this has been the case for Tatiana. However, in both cases, being able to complete a technical degree, which can lead to being competitive in the job market, provides former combatants with a sense of achievement which is extremely valuable.
- 59. At the time of these interviews, the ACR had recently introduced a new strategy to assist former combatants (just a few months preceding my interviews). Persons in the Process of Reintegration (PPR) are now assigned personal tutors who supervise the reintegration process (tutor to PPR ratio is around 1:50). The new reintegration route consists of eight dimensions (health, education, productivity, psychosocial, security, housing, family, personal), which are explored and planned according to the particular needs and expectations of each beneficiary. During a research visit on October 2015, I was told by ACR members of staff that this new system was still being adjusted.
- 60. The government document that describes the new reintegration modality includes a section that suggests there will be alternative certification routes for former combatants who have received training or are skilled in a specific area. Certifications are subject to an evaluation process where each person will have to demonstrate their abilities. From ACR internal document. Accessed by courtesy of the institution. Adriana López Mesa et al., "Dimensiones De La Ruta De Reintegración.

 Conceptualización Y Logros," ed. Dirección Programática de Reintegración (Bogotá, Colombia: Agencia Colombiana Para la Reintegración de Personas y Grupos Alzados en Armas, 2014).

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- 61. The stipend is approximatedly \$150 US per month, and it is only given if the participants attend all the activities scheduled for them each month. If they fail to attend, they do not receive the money. For more on excombatant's thoughts regarding the ACR stipend and regulations, see Estrada-Fuentes, "Becoming Citizens."
- 62. These include pardon for illegal activities such as rebellion, unauthorized use of military uniforms, and excludes, for instance, crimes against humanity.
- 63. On interview with Dario Villamizar Herrera (2014), who was close to the M-19 and worked on designing and implementing reintegration assistance in the 1990s, I learned that regular meetings to watch films or share coffee and food aimed at providing group support to persons in the process of reintegration, were common during the 1990s and some did find them useful. In this article I have also included the thoughts of Vasquez Perdomo on the benefit of holding group meetings with people undergoing the same process.
- 64. Around 40% of ACR beneficiaries suffer from PTSD. In 2010, a pilot study to evaluate the efficacy of utilizing Satyananda Yoga in the treatment of PTSD in excombatants of guerrilla and paramilitary groups was conducted in Colombia. The success of this pilot study resulted in the implementation of the twelve-week protocol two more times, in 2012 and 2013. The pilot study and subsequent reimplementations of the protocol demonstrated that the use of Satyananda Yoga is safe and effective in the treatment of PTSD symptoms, more than pharmacological treatments. Access to government documents courtesy of the ACR: de Personas y Grupos Alzados en Armas Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegracion, "Salud Mental. Ahimsa: Yoga Para La Reconciliación," (Bogotá: Presidencia de la República, 2013);

José Daniel Toledo Arenas, José Posada Villa, and María Adelaida López, *Ensayo Clínico Aleatorio Abierto Y Controlado Para Evaluar La Eficacia Y Seguridad De El Uso De Yoga Satyananda Por Doce Semanas En Sujetos Excombatientes No Militares Del Conflicto Armado Colombiano* (Bogotá, Colombia: Dunna Alternativas Creativas Para la Paz, N.A). In a different context, the Stanford School of Medicine in association with Stanford's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education has provided significant evidence on the benefit of implementing meditation and mindfulness practices to treat and reduce PTSD symptoms in war veterans. See E. M. Seppala et al., "Breathing-Based Meditation Decreases Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms in U.S. Military Veterans: A Randomized Controlled Longitudinal Study," *J Trauma Stress* 27.4 (2014).

å <u>Bio</u>

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Mediations around an Alternative Concept of "Work": Re-imagining the Bodies of Survivors of Trafficking

Urmimala Sarkar Munsi

ABSTRACT When I was rescued by the police and put in a shelter home, I felt angry. I did not know any other work. Before, I just had to lend my body and the work got done. I got paid, without having done anything (Poolish jokhon amake uddhar kore Shelter home e dilo, khoob raag hoechhilo. [...]

When I was rescued by the police and put in a shelter home, I felt angry. I did not know any other work. Before, I just had to lend my body and the work got done. I got paid, without having done anything (*Poolish jokhon amake uddhar kore Shelter home e dilo, khoob raag hoechhilo. Ami to aar kono kaaj i jantam na. ami amar shorir ta ke diey i khalash, kaj o hoey jeto, aar amio kono kaaj na kore poisha peye jetam.*) 1

My opening excerpt comes from a series of interviews I conducted with fifteen trafficked women who agreed to give interviews on condition of anonymity. They have brought up repeatedly the issue of "work" and their definition or attitude toward how they see their body as their tool/source of skill.

A large number of websites give detailed explanations and advice on human/sex trafficking and sex slavery. One such website by Soroptimist International of the Americas (which presents itself as "a global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment" explains sex trafficking/slavery as an exploitative process where:

Women and girls are typically trafficked into the commercial sex industry, i.e. prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation.

Not all slaves are trafficked, but all trafficking victims are victims of slavery. Human trafficking is a particularly cruel type of slavery because it removes the victim from all that is familiar to her, rendering her completely isolated and alone, often unable to speak the language of her captors or fellow victims.

This essay acknowledges that in terms of the day-to-day use of the word "labor" in the context of sex work, a particular configuration of the organization of labor needs to be understood, which includes both sexual and social labor, structured by a set of life constructs, "made up of living and working arrangements, practices, ideas, norms, ideologies, and consciousness that are unique to the sex industry." What intrigues me is, however, a different conceptualization of work (meaning the actual effort of sex as work), which may appear completely theoretical while trying to look at it from an outsider's

perspective, but constructs the basic tenet of "survival" for many such women taking conscious decisions to discontinue with the "work" that was their livelihood.

Sex trafficking may be forced, coercive, or consensual. Usually in the case of survivors of forced trafficking there are greater incidences of direct violence. Symbolic and systemic violence are ingrained within the system of the sex trade, where one person can buy rights to control acts of another person. The interviews I conducted almost all acknowledge the reaction to such violence by the act of the separation of the mind and the body of the sex worker, whose daily "work" routine forces her to keep the realms of the body and the mind as separate as possible as she continues the work of "pleasing." That dissociation produces a certain amount of ability to resist any outsider's control over the mind, even while controlling the body-object and its activities for a while. From the way in which the women I interviewed describe their relationship with their body, they dissociate as a form of resistance which helps the women to create a split between intimate and public space, and also between secret and public behavior. This split actually subverts the definitions of what is intimate or secret by making the mind a secretive and intimately-controlled tool, only available to self-control in defiance to the "public-ness" of sex-as-work that is a commodity and therefore available to the public and accountable as a product. This distance also is strengthened most times through a deep disrespect that the woman has towards her body and the work it does. Sex work assumes a certain skill of providing entertainment and pleasure to the client, on the part of the seller, but actually the biggest skill that this body learns through a series of experiences, often violent and completely subjugating, is to submit to the wishes of the client, and to make available her body for the person who pays for it to use for sexual pleasure. Though the woman is assumed to be in the business, the work itself hardly includes anything that can be seen as her agency. Giving in to the client's wishes is the "work" that the woman is required to learn.

This distance between the body and mind is something that has been talked about by practitioners and activists who work with rehabilitation processes at many levels, and in many geographies. Eve Ensler, in Kolkata for a collaborative program with Kolkata Sanved (December 2014), talked about "One Billion Rising" which exhorts women to dance. Ensler pointed out in an interview in *Telegraph India*, "Statistics say one in three women will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. That makes the figure roughly one billion." In the same interview she also says that after sexual assault the body "becomes a landscape of terror. It alienates the owner from her body. She may hate her body. Yet, how do we get back into the body?" Continuing the conversation, Ensler asserts in the same interview, that dance "helps me live in this thing that I have left—my body... Dance brings us back to our bodies." 5

Violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon, not specifically linked to any particular culture or religion, and the female survivors of different types of violence have to cope with a range of physical and mental damage. Surviving in/with the violated body thus becomes an ongoing process just as crucial as taking the next breath. Ensler's assertions about returning to the body—or to continue to live in it—are what came out as the most important day-to-day struggle for the young women I have interviewed. The toughest journey, for the survivor of extreme alienation, is to return into her own body. For a survivor, emerging from the submissive body and unlearning the auto-submissive mode is in itself a huge and gradual process which more often than not needs outside stimulation and help. Inhabiting that body again with the intent and purpose redefined (and not just using one's body as a tool) is what is the most difficult and lonely process. While this process is "rehabilitation" for the counselor or therapist, it is "re-habitation" for the survivor. If that is negotiated in and through a community—a sharing process with

other surviving bodies—that is what can start the relationship between survivor and her body anew.

In this context, does one refer to the body of a survivor of sex trafficking, as "the victim's body," "the violated body," "the traumatized body," or "the survivor's body?" The arguments between different groups of feminists in India have foregrounded issues of self-determination, perpetual victimization, and a debate between voluntary and coerced prostitution. Giving these arguments their required recognition, I would consciously like to move away from such arguments to the world of the child/teenager/woman who by being forced or coerced to travel to another region/country/territory gets dispossessed of community membership, identity, and citizenship where her only identity and "choice" of labor is the act of selling sex.

The systemic disposability, dispossession, and invisibility that permeate the discourses around survivors of trafficking—surviving in marginal spaces of rehabilitation processes, as their "work" stops, and their "skills" are no longer usable—are mediated through media, state agencies, NGOs, or even performers trying to embody or address the trauma and dehumanization. In a market-driven world, all rehabilitation, empowerment, and recovery efforts around trafficking become judged, even by the survivor herself, by the economic status that opens up through alternative occupations after having left the "work" that she used to perform.

Unequal economic relations have been the single greatest push factor in making female children and women vulnerable to trafficking and sex-work as a means of subsistence, where the body is considered as the only available tool for earning a living. Neoliberalism and globalization have resulted in increased demands for cheap labor including various forms of sexual labor, e.g., trafficking, forced prostitution, pornography, and other exploitative means. In such a circumstance being born as female citizens in a society which sees them as expendable and redundant creates a severe sense of dispossession.

The Issue of Embodiment and Empowerment

I now understand that our bodies are the core of our existence—I feel so sorry that I have spent 25 years of my life constantly hating that core, and all the things it knew so well to do. (ekhon jani amar shorir ta amar mool dhon, shara ta jibon—poncheesh bochhor-shorir ta ke, aar shorir diey je kaaj kori taake ghenna korei je katiey dilam, ki hobe!) $^{\underline{6}}$

The conversations about the bodies of survivors of sex trafficking are mostly hosted within the discourse of empowerment in the context of bodily violations and trauma. Roger Bechtel's work on trauma and traumatic memories, applies specifically to the scenario of the survivor. Trauma is the unprocessed or un-processable experience that manifests in disorders such as mind/body separation, uncontrollable anger, or severe depression. Roger Bechtel writes:

Traumatic memories do need to be "recovered" in order for the victim to mourn, but they are not holistic and intact, waiting anxiously for a probing therapeutic intervention to reveal them. In fact, what makes an event traumatic is one's inability to transform the lived experience into memory at the time of its occurrence. A traumatic memory, then, is not one that is hidden, but is one that is not yet made. Instead, the traumatic experience becomes trapped in the body —"possesses" the body, as Cathy Caruth puts it—for the traumatized body cannot let down its guard, the lingering activation of its "fight or flight"

response to the traumatic threat keeping it in a state of adrenalized hyperarousal. $\overline{2}$

In such a situation of "hyperarousal" as mentioned by Bechtel, cognitive assimilation becomes impossible and the result is an ongoing loop where the mind tries to claim the experience, while the body's response is more defensive and could be anything starting from complete withdrawal and hyperactive processing of signals like touch, smell, look, gesture, and acts. The traumatized person is unable, thus, either to own the past or live the present. The common symptoms are flashbacks, nightmares, guilt, anger, and anxiety.

My essay examines the possibilities of changing the dynamics of the mind and body through re-visiting, re-presentation, re-construction of self-image. I am drawing here from my background fieldwork in a range of experiences such as:

- 1. Dance and movement therapy workshops for school children and the so-called normal population;
- 2. Survival workshops and corporate well-being programs;
- 3. Performances by survivors (many times critiqued as victim-art);
- 4. Training sessions for trainees of DMT (Dance Movement Therapy) programs;
- Sessions conducted by the trainee or trained young DMT advocates, who have come
 out of similar circumstances of trafficking and have started working with the
 community; and
- 6. Mediatized re-presentations by the trauma "survivors" like films made by them or about them.

Simultaneously alongside the work of therapeutic workshops for empowerment/recovery/rehabilitation experiments, I have been looking at activism and performance works, different representations of trauma through visual art within spaces of social work, pop culture, or art. I will be drawing on these experiences in the remainder of my analyses.⁸

Redefining "Work" through Dance and Movement

The social constructs of two definitive words, "victim" and "survivor" (along with the links between the embodied cognition of the survivor and that of empowerment in the context of the violations experienced by victims of sex trafficking), became important while processing my experience of working with survivors of sex-trafficking at Kolkata Sanved, which uses Dance and Movement Therapy (DMT) as a tool for rehabilitation. I have tried to understand the embodied distress of the victim, whose frame of reference to herself is the way she is framed by the society, comparing her own body and labor (work) to the existing frames of a conceptual body of the woman constructed as the regular, normal, or the perfect. In spite of many debates over issues of sex-work, or sex as work, it is difficult to make these women register themselves as resistive and subversive citizens as they tend to fall back on the common social categorization of themselves as those whose labor is itself taken as pollutant and therefore marginalizing. Thus the trauma that already is a part of the experience and that surfaces again and again as not-fully-processed memory gets reinforced in much well-meaning rehabilitation work, unless there is a specific and careful therapeutic direction towards dealing with the trauma of individual survivors.

Roger Bechtel writes about performances that works on trauma:

What is missing from the common conception of trauma is thus not simply an accurate account of the role of memory, but the understanding that trauma is an affliction not only of the psyche, but also of the body. Unfortunately, aesthetic representations of trauma, whether of the pop-culture or high-art

variety, all too often reinforce the misconception by reprocessing it, exploiting the inherently dramatic elements of the stereotype of trauma—recognition, reversal, the demon within—and using trauma as a convenient narrative trope.²

Survival

The extremely repetitive and often violent structure of sex work as a livelihood induces a sense of disconnection between the body and the mind of the women. Thus being rescued does not necessarily automatically mean survival. Survival in the case of the rescued trafficked victims means to arrive at a (more or less) sustained state of being away from the death grip of the situation of slavery, and to be in control of their future. For survivors of such a severely dehumanized mental and physical landscape, Dance and Movement Therapy has been used as a tool to establish a conversation between the self and body, and to re-adjust the self-body-work dynamic. In this process, recovery means a realm of possibilities that the therapeutic encounters are able to create by focusing on building a different self-image of the survivor's body, her relationship with it, and her reclamation of the work it can do. In this context, to move systematically in a therapeutic workshop for many survivors is to acknowledge their bodies in their physical locations, composition, existing musculature, strength, weakness, pain, heaviness, and other physical conditions. To dance is to extend that physicality into specific directions, to find systems of moving within the body, to acknowledge effort, to channel energy—and to feel, emote, and also to acknowledge processes that connect what one feels with what one expresses through bodily and facial expressions. That is a lot of "work" and that chain of work can then easily extend to more and more challenges—expressing yet-unspoken words through bodies, or moving for reasons beyond survival. This process, most importantly, helps create another definition of work for the previously violated body for shaping the dramaturgy of rehabilitation and a life beyond it.

It is important to acknowledge that a lot depends on the survivors' ability (many times through the help that one could get from therapeutic encounters) to perform and celebrate this journey away from victimhood—for a consistent length of time so that it becomes a habit—of thinking beyond vulnerability and victimhood with growing self-confidence. Therefore it is the performance of "surviving" that becomes one of the key factors in re-routing one's relationship with one's own body and helps situate it in the so-called "everyday" situation. In my research, I continue to look at the roles of embodied practices as tools to address the vulnerability factor, which can then shape the case-specific dramaturgy of rehabilitation, to access the differential referencing of strains of the past life in the life beyond rehabilitation. I suggest here that shifting locations from victimhood to empowerment and recovery of selfhood silently surpass one in-between location, that of the location of the survivor, where there is an important registering of the huge capability of the woman herself: to have taken the final step out of her "everything is lost" state of hopelessness to "I can survive—if I can hold on to this new found strength" stage of being.



Photo credit: Amy Parish, courtesy of Kolkata Sanved.

(En)countering Memory: Performance of Victimhood to Performance of Empowerment

The biggest violence that is registered by many of the survivors is that of being denied authority over one's own body. These women share a systemic disposability and invisibility, as the business relies on the victim's illegality and criminality to generate maximum revenues; this is aggravated by repressive state apparatuses on every side of the trafficking scheme.

Therefore it is important to understand that the shift from embodiment to empowerment has to be a process involving detailed work in a script (I choose to call it "dramaturgy" as in this case it is to be used as the background work for the therapeutic process or the performance). The dramaturgy essentially needs to have two layers. One important part is to locate the victim's body (with its problematic vulnerabilities stemming from distorted self-image, fear, anger, negative sexuality, distancing mechanisms, and reactions to touch) in a space with other vulnerable bodies. ¹⁰ These body stories that are part of these therapeutic sessions are replete with reactions to nearness/touch/feeling that get communicated as bodies move together. The roots of such actions and reactions may be located in different histories of violations, and generated from very different memories of vulnerability. Connecting such bodies of difference through the second layer of dramaturgical manipulations thus becomes a challenge for such recovery processes.

For example, for many participants of survival/recovery workshops, the usual reaction was a sense of disconnection, disrespect toward one's own body, and a problem of coping with proximity to other bodies. To make oneself invisible by crouching and putting one's head down between knees or sitting with one's back towards the room were some of the common reactions when asked to occupy a space.

In the same group, some women were more confident and could be termed as initiators. Some participants came forward and took initiatives to volunteer and try out processes introduced in the workshop, while for some others, even holding hands with other participants took a long time. The shared space created a sense of comfort which also helped processes of changing texts of embodiment for participants.

The body is always in movement. And no two bodies move in the same way. The vulnerability factor becomes evident with subtle and small changes in expressions, contractions of muscles, stiffening of the spine, and almost indiscernible shifts in postures. When the therapeutic activities succeed in changing the relationship between the body

and the mind of the survivor, one can observe six emerging themes of empowerment and changing definitions of "work." First, from disconnectedness or rejection of the body there emerges familiarization with and liking of one's own body—through movements that replace painful associations with violence with a sense of security and control and belonging to the present. This change is motivated by movement exercises that start and develop a systematic acknowledgement of body parts and connection to them. Second, from a sense of guilt and marginalization, one can experience a sense of being empowered and free to express through the uses of dance and movement. This opening up occurs literally and physically, through walking, sharing space, and mirroring. Third, from movements which are light and indirect reflecting a lack of confidence, self-assurance, and grounding, the process changes them to confident, direct movements, taking responsibility and pleasure in self-confident moves. These changes are visible in the mirroring exercises with partners in DMT workshops that increase confidence and empathy for others, and enhance emotional understanding through increased use of the mirror neuron system. 11



Workshop on body awareness. Photo credit: Urmimala Sarkar Munsi, courtsey of Kolkata Sanved.

Fourth, many women talk about being tired of speaking about pain and deprivation to justify their involvement in the sex trade with stories of horror. They find it a great relief to instead move and bring out their feelings through their bodies. Superimposing a pleasurable experience of the body through movements over an existing uneasy relationship with it is one of the powerful potentials of "performing" empowerment. They experience this change through reclaiming their selves and bodies through happy, sad, light, heavy, big, small movements that come to establish a grammar of "pleasure" instead of "pleasing." Fifth, from a state of constant anxiety in which many of the survivors can never close their eyes or relax even while lying on the ground, there arises a sense of community and kinesthetic empathy. Movement induces "calming down" processes in persons whose sense of marginalization ranges from being without a state or a sense of home, complete or partial disconnection from family, to neurotic fear, psychosis, or anger. The constant enactment through performance of the word "freedom" (of the body, mind, and most importantly of any choice that the person wants to make) can create extensive and lasting confidence, a sense of resolution, and a long term vision of the future. Finally, from having guilt, stigma, anxiety, depression, and self-induced blockages of memory and expressivity, to moving together with verbal and non-verbal kinetic engagement, leads to the creation of a communal intimacy among a group of survivors coming together in a

Dance and Movement Therapy session. Group exercises, help exercises, sharing the "work" of creating a movement sequence, improvisations on storytelling, sharing of movements of vulnerability and risking coming out of it—while in a group, others are also going through the same process—increases the sense of self-worth as women feel part of a shared time, space, and work process moving beyond the past together.

In terms of these six shifts, a sense of confidence in the preliminary stage after the rescue is transitory. Constant residual "holding back" is experienced side-by-side with the elation of finding the new self, until the process normalizes the reference points and connections between the body-subject and the body-object over prolonged performative journeys. This is where the creation of a personalized healing text becomes essential. To move from "I fear..." to "I am not afraid of..." and from "I was..." to "I can...," one needs a dramaturgy capable of creating one's own route to a sustained sense of healing and alternative definition of "work."

Conclusion: Re-working Life

Redefining the self after rescue and rehabilitation is a time-consuming process, where progress is often marred or hampered by setbacks. An ongoing and processual well-being program has been seen as the only way to keep the path of recovery as smooth and continuous as possible. It is commonly asserted that the process of recovery consists of stages to improve social skills, self-awareness, and enhancing one's connection with one's own bodily activities. Though there are a number of arguments regarding the appropriate terminology or the status to be accorded to all activities that were previously grouped under "prostitution," the shift to the more recent term "sex-work" does not take care of the social conditioning that the survivors create for themselves through their interactions with the outside world. A large part of what the survivors think of themselves also comes from the use they put their bodies to, as the space to be rented out for short or long durations. Bringing the mind back into the body is easier said than done, unless processual activation and actual exercises of inhabiting the body are introduced to them as available skills. Thus it is important to make available concrete tools for creating mind-body connectivity through a system of default mechanisms. Activating an alternate sense of work through systematic and therapeutic use of movements and dance becomes easily understandable by the survivors, as the tangible sense of activity and exhaustion is immediate and inevitable. This physical activation process is accompanied by awareness of the building activities of dialogues and individual/group reflections—whereby subconscious activities and motivations may be discussed and assimilated as a more permanent sense of achievement. The convincing of the body and mind may require different time-engagements for different survivors, but the process yields results and is considered by most therapists as well worth a try. This research serves to highlight the necessity of providing paths for survivors to reclaim their bodies and redefine their ability to be productive as a counterbalance to the injustices they have suffered as trafficked women, unprotected by the state, and often uncared for by society.

Notes

1. Rita, (name changed). Delhi, January, 2015. This excerpt is from an interview which is a part of a series of interviews conducted, recorded, transcribed, and translated by the author in person. Most of these women agreed to give interviews only on condition of anonymity, or wanted to use other names. They brought up repeatedly the issue of "work" and their definition or attitude toward what they see as their body as their tool/source of skill. All translations are mine.

- 2. Soroptimist International of the Americas started as a club in 1921, and since then has grown into a popular, global volunteer movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls. They currently have over eighty-thousand club members from 132 countries. Their website provides volunteering opportunities all over the world for working on projects on issues like sanitation, sexual violence, displacement, and education, etc. "Sex Slavery/Trafficking: Frequently Asked Questions," Soroptimist website, accessed February 18, 2016, http://www.soroptimist.org/trafficking/faq.html.
- 3. Prabha Kotiswaran, "Born Unto Brothels-Toward a Legal Ethnography of Sex Work in an Indian Red-Light Area," *Law of Social Inquiry*, 33, no. 3 (2008), 579-629, SOAS School of Law Research Paper No. 07/2010, accessed February 15, 2016, http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1636966.
- 4. Nivedita Menon describes the effect of sexual violence by saying "its harmful effect lying not so much in the physical assault, but in the transgression of the victim's conceptions of selfhood and sovereignty." Nivedita Menon, *Recovering Subversion: Feminist Politics Beyond the Law* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 2004), 141. See also, "Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 48/104. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women," United Nations A/RES/48/104, 1993, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.un-documents.net/a48r104.htm. This defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in pubic or in private life."
- 5. Eve Ensler's interview was published in *The Telegraph* while Ensler was in Kolkata in 2014, as one of the organizers for the event DANCE FOR REVOLUTION, jointly organized by Kolkata Sanved in collaboration with the American Centre and St. Xavier's College. Chandrima S. Bhattacharya, "Dance To Reclaim The Body," *The Telegraph* Calcutta, India, December 20, 2014, accessed January 15, 2015, http://www.telegraphindia.com/1141220/jsp/calcutta/story_4383.jsp#.Vy61wPl97IU. Also see the facts she quoted from "Unite to End Violence Against Women," United Nations, February 2008, accessed February 18, 2016, http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf.
- 6. Meena (Name changed), Mumbai, August, 2014. This translated excerpt is from an unstructured, recorded, and transcribed interview conducted by the author in August, 2014 in Mumbai.
- 7. Roger Bechtel, "The Body of Trauma: Empathy, Mourning, and Media in Troika Ranch's *Loopdiver*," *Theatre Journal* 65, no. 1 (2013): 77.
- 8. One important example of a particular project that I would like to refer to in this context is a project named "Transforming Steps" initiated by a non-governmental organization, Kolkata Sanved, in Kolkata and Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, in March 2012. Six dancers from Kolkata Sanved went through a program of workshops and training with two choreographers provided by Sadler's Wells as a part of the Sadler's Wells Connect Festival. The dancers from Kolkata Sanved took part in this project aimed at raising awareness of human trafficking. The 'Transforming Steps' project coincided with the London Olympics and was aimed at raising awareness about the increase in human trafficking during major sporting events. A series of workshops, movement practices, and choreographic encounters

were conducted both in Kolkata as well as in London. The survivors (young girls rescued from trafficking) received training in videography and created short videos as part of this project, which were then edited to be made into a film and shown during the same time in London. The performance itself took place at the Lillian Baylis Studio in London. "Kolkata Sanved dancers perform at the Sadler's Wells Connect Festival," Paul Hamlyn Foundations News, March 27, 2012, accessed May 8, 2016, http://www.phf.org.uk/news/kolkata-sanved-dancers-perform-sadlers-wells-connect-festival.

- 9. Bechtel, "The Body Of Trauma," 77. 🔁
- 10. Most activities, including those as intimate as the act of bathing, are conducted in shared spaces using sparse facilities. Hence, even in terms of therapy, group works are important. It is also a reality that given the lack of support, space, time, and adequate funding, such therapeutic sessions are possible only in groups in most cases. Grouping together bodies with different issues of vulnerability for sessions of therapy becomes a most difficult yet necessary task. The varied sources of vulnerability create different mind-body dynamics in the participants. Though the facilitator gets to work with a group of women in a shared space for a specific time period, these women need to be essentially taken as bodies of difference. Hence the task of the facilitator is essentially to work on creating a community, but constantly to keep in mind the struggle that may be going on within the individual participants in working with other bodies that react very differently. In India, in most lower income group families, women grow up with very little sense of individual space.
- 11. Using mirroring often helps in enhancing the sense of the surroundings, by helping the subject to focus on the other body with focused concentration. Mirroring activates a group of specialized neurons which mirror the movements and actions of others. The activation of the mirror neuron system is said to facilitate social cognition, empathetic understanding, and communicative skills. Often used in standard dance and theatre training, mirroring is used as a tool to enhance interpersonal communications and observational capacities. Giovanni Buccino, Ana Solodkin, and Steven L. Small, "Functions of the Mirror Neuron System: Implications for Neurorehabilitation." *Cognitive Behavioural Neurology* 19, no.1 (2006), 55–63.



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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Beds and Tables: Ordinary Violence in Rascón Banda's *Hotel Juárez*

Debra Castillo

ABSTRACT Hotels make for great theatre. They are quintessentially modern (this is especially true of motels, by way of their association with automobiles); they allow for unexpected encounters and mysterious retreats—a clichéd feature of practically every spy drama and tale of illicit sex we can remember; they combine public (lobby, bar, dining room) with private (guest [...]

Hotels make for great theatre. They are quintessentially modern (this is especially true of motels, by way of their association with automobiles); they allow for unexpected encounters and mysterious retreats—a clichéd feature of practically every spy drama and tale of illicit sex we can remember; they combine public (lobby, bar, dining room) with private (guest rooms) spaces in felicitous combinations. They are so effective as a symbolically resonant fictional setting, perhaps, because in the outside world they serve as a paramount instance of the "heterotopia," a term coined by Michel Foucault to describe a constellation of social organizations that vibrate between two states in highly productive ways. Says the French theorist, "I am interested in certain [sites] that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect." He defines heterotopias as both specific sites and non-places, and says they are "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible." Examples he references include honeymoon hotels (and motels in general), ships, cemeteries, libraries, barracks, prisons, brothels, and—at his most expansive-colonies.

The list is telling; each case wrenches apart a concept of private spaces and forcefully links it to public exposure in a kind of fantasy of openness and containment. Likewise, chillingly, these various, seemingly unrelated heterotopias have a strong, if underexplored, relation to each other, allowing us to see the continuities between, for instance, a prison, a hotel, and a brothel. Foucault continues: "Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable." Containment and access—at the same time—are central, and likewise central is the question of who gets to go through the open doors, who is closed behind them, and who has the key. This is certainly the case in Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda's play Hotel Juárez (2003), where the hotel-brothel-prison-cemetery analogy can also be understood in the context of the play as a roughly chronological sequence, an iteration of a series of entries followed by containment within increasingly small enclosed spaces. 3

Unsurprisingly, there is a long history of creative writers who use hotels as the site for stories, plotting encounters that are facilitated by the uncanny/unhomely space of "hospitality." The twist in the hospitality business turns on the guest's entry into a studied simulacrum of the home that almost immediately turns strange, a familiar-alien space that

is also and at the same time structured as an imagined microcosm of community and of family. Thus, ideally, the hotel space is a shared semi-public location—the home away from home—in which contacts with a particular community of travelers are stripped down to a series of orchestrated encounters in a contained space. Of course, the art resides in confounding mundane expectations for an experience that is both boring (homelike, repeatable) and exciting (the encounter with difference).

Literary examples are easy to find: the hotel is fundamental to shaping the encounters in films as disparate as Terry George's 2004 *Hotel Rwanda* and Wes Anderson's 2014 *Grand Budapest Hotel* (the first based on the true story of Paul Rusesabagina; the second on Stefan Zweig's fanciful fiction). D. M. Thomas's 1981 novel *The White Hotel* has acquired an almost comic history of love affairs with big-name directors who have promised to bring it to the silver screen. Closer to the Hispanist orbit, Cuban American Cristina García sets her 2010 novel, *Lady Matador's Hotel*, in a luxury Central American hotel to order to explore the intersection of unlikely characters in the midst of political turmoil; for her part, Puerto Rican Mayra Santos-Febres, in her 2010 *Cualquier Miércoles Soy Yuya* (*I'm Yours any Wednesday*), uses a Caribbean motel as the site for her unfolding mystery. I have, with the theatre group Teatrotaller, made an incursion into this genre as well, when we produced Marco Antonio de la Parra's acerbic comic-book/Shakespeare parody/social commentary set in a run-down hotel in a squalid, nameless Latin American country, *King Kong Palace*, on Shakespeare's birthday at the Willard Straight Hall Theatre, in 2014.

The hotel is homely (i.e., it recuperates the modern idea of the home, and especially the bedroom, as an exclusive, private space), and unhomely (always generic, always at the threshold of the public space, far too multiple, and too easily breached) at the same time. It cannot surprise us that "hospital," "hostage," and "hotel" all come from the same root: the Greek verb εστιάω, estiao (to receive/welcome somebody in my house; to prepare a meal for somebody). Following this impeccable logic of etymology, for dramatic purposes welcoming someone to our house becomes kidnapping, and preparing a meal means poisoning the guest; conversely, travelers are migrants or terrorists invading a foreign space, our home space. Heterotopia plays on this instability, something enhanced, by the border condition itself, as Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda notes: "el teatro es acción y conflicto. La frontera es conflicto en acción" ("theatre is action and conflict. The border is conflict in action"). From hostile hospitality, by a parallel permutation of terms and images in his *Hotel Juárez*, violence invades the home; bedrooms become containers and beds become biers; dining room tables become operating tables, as well as sites for table dances.

The drama of the US-Mexican border was nowhere so apparent in recent years as that played out between EI Paso and Ciudad Juárez; where the US city has year after year confirmed its status as the safest city in the USA, while just across the bridge, in Ciudad Juárez, until recently the Juárez and Sinaloa drug cartels were involved in a deadly conflict over territory, reaching its height between 2009-2012, and resulting, for example, in 3,622 homicides in 2010 in this city of one million people, the worst of several very bad years. Yet it is not this general context of lawlessness that has provoked the most international attention to this border city, but rather the phenomenon of feminicides, the explicit topic of Rascón Banda's play: the ritual, serial killing of women—mostly young, poor, maquiladora workers with long hair—that made Ciudad Juárez a focus of activism, academic study, and artistic production since the turn of the millennium, famously including projects like Lourdes Portillo's controversial documentary, *Señorita extraviada* (2003), and ranging from a horrific section of Roberto Bolaño's posthumous novel *2666* (2004) to the FX series *The Bridge* (2013). Between 1993–2003, approximately 340 young women were murdered, and many more disappeared in that city, at which time

Sergio González Rodríguez, Esther Chávez Cano, and others began to speak out against the horrifying discoveries of young women's bodies in the desert, showing signs of sexual torture and mutilation. Mexican authorities were slow to investigate these murders, even when the feminicides reached a high of 304 in the year 2010 alone, prompting charges of coverups and selective impunity when so-called "disposable" people were the victims of violence. To this day no one can confidently confirm the exact number of feminicides, as most of the murders remain uninvestigated and much of the original evidence has disappeared.

Rascón Banda, in *Hotel Juárez*, his last published play before his death in 2008, takes on this soup of hidden violence, rumor, and misdirection, metaphorizing all of Ciudad Juárez as a hotel in which victims and perpetrators are forced into close contact. Like his earlier 2000 play, *La Mujer que Cayó del Cielo* (*Woman who Fell from the Sky*), in this play as well he mixes documentary material with his own creative elaborations, to produce a hybrid docu-fiction denouncing official foot-dragging and supporting grassroots struggles for justice. Thus, Rascón Banda's play continually negotiates between the competing discourses of the "real" and the "fictional," as it also takes on the challenge of revealing the underpinnings of two melodramatic styles: that of grassroots denunciation and that of state-sponsored rhetoric, contextualizing both of them as spectacle, and hence best subject to representation and deconstruction through the dramatic medium.

The first word in the play, the query from the hotel clerk, "¿Vacaciones?" ("Vacation?"), 2 sets up a scene of ordinary exchange in the banal hotel setting. Ángela, who has come from Kansas in search of her missing sister Vanesa, decides on an indeterminate stay. By the last scene, Ángela and magician/stripper Ramsés are discovered in bed together, then arrested and killed in the crossfire between a corrupt cop and Johny [sic.], a local pimp, colluder in the snuff porn business, and sole survivor of the shootout. 10 In between the lobby and guest room settings of the opening and closing scenes, the audience eavesdrops on conversations that evoke a series of other spaces in the hotel, some public, some ostensibly private, some forbidden, and occluded. At the first level, then, the play moves between ordinariness and an extraordinary violation, between public and presumed private interactions, between the aleatory movement of a vacationer and the driven narrative of the amateur detective. For Sarah Misemer, speaking at a more abstract level, Hotel Juárez operates as a microcosm of the state. The play, in this respect, dramatizes the "clash between universal human rights and those rights that are the domain of the nation state," in a peripheral location where violence defines the limits of citizenship and the shape of an emergent, profoundly abject identity. 11

The structurally shared conceptual space of the hotel and the prison as heterotopias reminds us that the projected ordinariness of the hotel necessarily struggles against the histories of invisibilized violence within its walls, and within other walls where the warehousing of human beings entails surveillance rather than privacy, and where all the locks are on the wrong side of the doors. Coming at the same conflation from another perspective, Jenna Loyd, Andrew Burridge, and Matthew Mitchelson study the language of for-profit detention facility proposals in the USA—captured by the euphemism "bed development"—concluding that "the discourse of bedspace powerfully communicates that the prison, for all intents and purposes, works like a motel—a collection of beds in bedrooms." Here the heritage of that root verb bringing together hostility and hospitality is very much in evidence: there is no comfort to be found in these hotel-prisons, and negligible access to justice.

This condition is not limited to Juárez, or the US border area. Joseph Pugliese, for instance, addresses the way that shipping containers and hotel rooms converge as civil technologies for immigrant transport and control in Australia, focusing on the way the

space of commerce inflects the language of home. Across the globe, dilapidated motels extend detention/refugee center "bedspaces" and serve as loci of containment and spaces of harm. In this respect, Pugliese analyzes the use of ordinary-looking motels and demountable buildings as detention facilities in Australia, writing:

I have spent some time analysing this image of a suburban Australian motel in terms of its ordinariness as, in what follows, I want both to underscore this ordinariness and to problematise it. This double movement will be enabled by my positioning of this motel within violent relations of power that fundamentally belie this ordinariness, even as they draw on it in order to efface the very exercise of violence that transpired in one of the rooms of this motel. 13

The specific cases to which he refers concern asylum seekers who become mentally ill in detention, and who are returned to custody, and isolation, thus worsening their conditions. In one particular instance, a Kurdish man too ill to be returned to detention was locked for months on end in a hotel room he was not allowed to exit, even for a few minutes. Pugliese's story happens to take place in Australia, but similar stories of detainees being driven to severe depression and suicide have long been unhappily familiar from many locations in the USA, and, with the current refugee crisis, Europe.

Rascón Banda, in *Hotel Juárez*, very succinctly brings together the three spaces of hotel, prison, and container in the haunting image of the mysterious packages being prepared for sale in Rotterdam that becomes the central repeating image in the play. The mystery surrounding these packages anchors the playwright's denunciation of the disappearance of hundreds of young women in Juárez, and he solves the question by uncovering murderous trafficking in the traces left by these murdered bodies in the form of hugely profitable snuff films. Economically, the hotel in this play serves as a supposed refuge for migrants from other parts of Mexico who hope to cross the border into the United States, and who will thereupon disappear from the Mexican body politic into a competing labor pool. In this play, however, a distinct, gendered economy is at play. The men will head north, although some of them, as we and Rascón Banda know well, also "disappear" in the desert, or will be murdered by narcos after having served their purpose as drug mules. The young women are siphoned off from this group, lured into prostitution, or invited to work as movie actors, then locked into hidden bedrooms where they are raped and murdered for snuff films. 16

Bedspace in this play is prison space, porn movie set, operating table, bier. The body sleeps, performs, dies, and is dismembered. Here, as is generally true in other Rascón Banda plays with a documentary edge, the metaphorical condensation of the larger social reality into the theatrical hotel paradoxically serves as an amplifier of intuited, underreported connections. The two by-products of this industry—porn films and dismembered bodies—are differentially disposed of and shipped out of the hotel in containers/packages of different sorts to different locations: the commercial markets in Europe, the desert trash heaps on the outskirts of Juárez. One might want to argue that the meaning of table, of bed, of package has been perverted, except that, in the unimpeachable logic of Rascón Banda's play, we are meant to see that transnational economic and geopolitical realities conspire to make these interpretations and repurposings absolutely normative and even revelatory.

"No aceptamos putas," the hotel manager preemptively warns Ángela ("We don't accept whores"). 17 Except, of course, that they do, only under the table, as it were. *Hotel Juárez* reflects a highly stratified society, one that we hear about in the course of the play but, crucially, cannot fully apprehend. This is only partly due to the theatrical constraints as opposed to, for example, filmic depictions of hotels. The economics of production for small

plays like this one mean only a limited number of sets will be constructed. More important, though, is the constant evocation of spaces that we will not see, and the allusion, in stories by Ramsés, or by striking maquiladora worker, Lupe (who gives Ángela crucial insight into her sister's life in the Taiwanese-owned plant), to a wider cast that we will never meet. The theatrical obligation to imagine this mostly invisible space faithfully evokes the hidden nature of social inequalities, which everyone in the play knows exists and knows contributes to profuse criminality, but which are exceptionally hard to locate or visualize since so many floors are inaccessible and so many doors are locked.

The putas are on the sixth floor, the top floor by the way, along with retired teachers (an interesting juxtaposition), a World War II veteran, a small-time drug dealer, and assorted family members looking for their lost children. The third floor, we learn, is full of would-be migrants along with black market smugglers of stolen goods and pirated videos. These objects constitute the other set of packages going in and out of the country, the exchange of labor for Hollywood movies and second-hand clothes. The second floor houses the politicians, the big-time narcos, the cattlemen, and the bullfighters—the constellation of power and murderous intent. The first floor, of course, comprises the lobby and the bar. Snuff films are made in the cellar, thus locating the sex industry's victims at the highest and lowest levels of the hotel's imaginary infrastructure. Rascón Banda never tells us who occupies the fourth and fifth floors—presumably they are reserved for vacationers and outsiders like Ángela. In any case, while the analogy is not exact, the intent of Rascón Banda's multistoried hotel seems to echo to some extent the kind of social hierarchy framed by writers like José Luis González by way of a metaphorical house in his 1980 *País de Cuatro Pisos* (*Four-Storeyed Country*).

Of the twenty scenes in the play, only one is set in an abstract space outside the hotel proper (scene 19, "Las Tres Cruces," ("The Three Crosses"), a poetic evocation of the burial ground for the disappeared women in which the ghost of one of the missing women, Vanesa, speaks to Ángela), and only one has an exterior view of any sort (Ramsés' meditation on the view of nighttime Juárez from the balcony in scene 10). The rest of the scenes are claustrophobically both internal and inward looking, as if from the inside of a container. One scene, the murder of Rosalba by the police chief making the snuff film, takes place in the cellar; two take place in the lobby; two in the bar, including the crucial interview with the Egyptian; three occur in the hallways or outside of rooms; two in the licenciado's room and one in the police chief's; one each takes place in Lupe's and Ramsés' rooms. The rest of the play, and with increasing emphasis towards the end, takes place in Ángela's room (scenes 5, 13, 16, 18, 20).

Drawn from historical record, the interview with the Egyptian—his real name, Abdul Latif Sharif Sharif, is not mentioned in the play—occurs at the halfway point of the drama, and reviews his claims of innocence, arguing that he is the scapegoat for other, richer, more powerful men. In the play, this interview is projected on the bar's television screen, right after the bartender switches channels away from a Tin-Tan movie, and the text is drawn from documentary records of interviews with the actual accused serial murderer. It is unclear if anyone in the bar is meant to pay attention to the interview; the two groups, composed of Ángela, Ramsés, and Lupe on the one hand, and the manager, Johny, and Rosalba on the other, would each have different investments in the ongoing reporting. For the first group, the Egyptian's words—if they attended to them—may have signaled hope that the authorities have successfully concluded their investigation and captured the notorious serial killer; for the manager and Johny, the media attention on the accused killer deflects attention from their ongoing activities, and their plans for Rosalba. The scene ends with reference to Aurora, Ángela's missing sister, just one more disappearance among many, and serves as a premonition and warning for Rosalba, who clearly does not

get the point that in the media frenzy and the official hand-waving, the problem of the continuing violence has gone unresolved, and that she herself has been targeted as the next victim. "Un chivo expiatorio. Eso soy," the Egyptian says at the beginning of the interview, and he repeats this point later, for emphasis ("A scapegoat. That's what I am"). 18

The story as the Egyptian tells it, still from his prison cell, is murky, but the direction of his accusation is clear, pointing to well-connected bar owner Alejandro Máynez. Máynez is in fact one of the few real names mentioned in the play. An accused serial killer associated with the Juárez feminicides, he has been fugitive for many years, and is the presumed author of the 1995 manuscript *El diario de Richie* (Richie's Diary), which offers gruesome details about dozens of the Juárez murders, linking them to organized crime and the production of snuff films. 19 That Máynez is identified as a bar owner and murderer of maquiladora women, in the bar setting, is surely not coincidental. The hotel bar is haunted by the image of those other bars, where prostitutes ply their trade, where maquiladora workers come on their day off to drink margaritas, where men hunt women, where tables are props for sexual activity and metaphors for infamous table dances.

If I were producing the play, I would make sure that neither of the two groups in the bar, nor the bartender, paid the least attention to this filmed interview, if only because the actual workings of "civil death" (Lisa Marie Cacho's term) 20 or "precarious lives" (Judith Butler) 21 preclude alliances among groups of people already discursively and politically isolated from each other and from the range of protections that we naively presume fall under the category of human rights. As Cacho has argued, organizing on behalf of these marginalized and oppressed groups has often been liable to have the unintended opposite effect; to echo her book's subtitle (Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected). For Butler, mourning and violence are linked to the hierarchical category of grievability; some lives, she argues, always the most precarious and unprotected lives, are simply not seen as worthy of attention or grief in the mainstream's eyes. These lives, and deaths would include those of the hundreds of feminicides in Juárez and elsewhere in the world, where the poisonous combination of sex and death are part of a quotidian economy. As Pugliese argues, in a parallel case, "What is particularly intolerable about this vernacular violence is that it destroys the hope that there might be the possibility to occupy another space—the civic—that is not generative of trauma and violence."22

The second key scene, from the perspective of a discussion of trafficking, is scene 15, "En la Bodega," ("In the Cellar") in which Rosalba is lured by Johny's promise of a role in the movies, a role she plays against her will and with profound irony as the comandante orders her to strip, then binds her, tortures her, kills her, and rapes her as she is dying. Her shocking death, ticked out over minutes and in full view of the audience to the play, serves that audience in the theatre in the same respect as the snuff film will serve the audience in Rotterdam. It is something we consented to and purchased with our ticket, expecting a combination of horror and pleasure, mitigated by our self righteous belief in our social conscience. Both real and unreal, the scene of torture is also one of sexual titillation and implicates us in the unsettling biopolitical question that Jacques Derrida calls "the unstable limit between 'making-die' and 'letting-die." Moreover, it is a scene of "making die" anchored precisely on the fault line of an unstable geopolitical border, that of "conflicto en acción" ("conflict in action") with a necrological twist.

"Así es el bisnes," Johny tells Ángela when trying to convince her to make a porn film, presumably after slipping her a date-rape drug during a conversation in the bar ("It's just business"). 24 She declines, unlike Rosalba, but Johny is not about to take no for an answer. The business model that involves Johny, the comandante, and their unwitting victims is unexpectedly close to the way contemporary businessmen describe their relation to the US-based model of globalization—which consists in coming into a country "to fuck you

over." R.W Connell and Julian Wood's ethnographic study of transnational business masculinity—really, a kind of hypermasculinity—considers the personality required for the movers and shakers in global capitalism, capturing the aggressive style of their language and its affects and effects. These men (and a very few women) reconstruct the managerial class as defined by the deployment of an overt use of power, along with the ability to withstand power plays by others. Connell's transnational businessmen reject the "dusty old banker" image in favor of a "hollowing out" of the business executive, who recognizes no deeper rationale than the bottom line, indeed, no rationale at all except for the pursuit of profit. Thus, he finds, transnational business masculinity is characterized by social conservatism, compulsory heterosexuality, emotional distantiation from women and a "commercialization of feeling." Loyalty is conditional, women are commodified, and there is no expression of care for others except as publicity. The cruelty and violence displayed in Rascón Banda's characters, in this sense, is less a hyperbolic projection of a late capitalist idea taken to the extreme, than a realistic uncovering of the ordinary cruelties of contemporary business practice.

Ramsés intervenes between Johny's "bisnes" and Ángela's potential participation in it, postponing her/their death. Yet Ramsés' timely, and unlikely, interference in Johny's "bisnes" reminds us of all the people who do not intercede on Ángela's behalf: the bartender, the other patrons in the bar, who are at best indifferent, at worst complicit in the serial murders that occur under their noses. Pugliese makes a point of uncovering the workings of this kind of pervasive silence: "Unlike the immigration officials, prison guards and police who are in direct government employ, the hotel manager, clerks and cleaners operate under the guise that they are free agents whose civilian hands are clean of violence. In other words, they are marked by a disavowal of their own investment in economies of violence that cut across seemingly discrete categories, sites and subjects." 27 Making-die is Johny's business, as is the lucrative exchange in human and drug packages going north to the USA for labor and consumption, or, in the form of videotapes, east for sale to the porn market in Europe. At the same time, Rascón Banda implicates us all in the broader implications of letting-die, the plausible deniability that is the exclusive province of the privileged, those of us exempt from the terrors of civic death and the fears of an unvalued life.

Así es el bisnes, indeed.

Notes

- 1. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16 no. 1 (1986): 24-25.
- 2. Ibid., 26.
- 3. Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda (1948-2008) was a Mexican lawyer and playwright famous for his attention to social justice in his work, which often has a documentary edge. He is the author of two dozen plays, as well as poetry and narrative fiction, and the winner of many national awards. In many of his works, as is true in *Hotel Juárez*, he draws inspiration from the northern Mexico border area and his home state of Chihuahua.
- 4. In an article entitled "Celluloid Dreams," D. M. Thomas cites negotiations involving Barbra Streisand and Keith Barish, Bobby Geisler and John Roberdeau, Terrance Malick, Bernardo Bertolucci, Chuck Mee, Meryl Streep, David Lynch and Isabella Rossellini, Hector Babenco, Emir Kusturica, Pedro Almodóvar, David Cronenberg, along with innumerable scriptwriters, lawyers, and actors. D.M. Thomas, "Celuloid Dreams," *The Guardian*, August 27, 2004, accessed April 29, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/film/2004/aug/28/books.featuresreviews.

- 5. All translations in this article are mine.
- Cited in Sarah Misemer, "Stages of Transit: Rascón Banda's Hotel Juárez and Perveroni's Berlín," in Imagining Human Rights in Twenty-first Century Theatre, eds. Florian N. Becker, Paola S. Hernández, and Brenda Werth (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 137.
- 7. This number comes from *El diario de Juárez*, citing the Chihuahua state statistics. ("Juarez May Murder Toll: 74..Lowest in 49 Months," *Frontera List*, June 1, 2012, accessed April 29, 2016, https://fronteralist.org/tag/chihuahua.) https://fronteralist.org/tag/chihuahua.)
- 8. While a spotlight has been cast on Ciudad Juárez, probably in great part due to its proximity to the USA, it is worth remembering that (1) the feminicide rate in Juárez is lower than the USA, and (2) the Mexican government's lag in prosecution of these murders is not unusual in the country as a whole, where, for example, of 3,892 feminicides registered nationally between 2012–2013, only 24% were investigated, and 1.6% lead to sentencing. See Brooke Binkowski, "Mexico's Epidemic of Missing and Murdered Women," *The Globe and Mail*, July 13, 2015, accessed April 29, 2016, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/mexicos-epidemic-of-missing-and-murdered-women/article25137141.
- 9. Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, "Hotel Juárez," in *Hotel Juárez: Dramaturgía de feminicidios*, ed. Enrique Mijares, *Teatro de la frontera* 22/23 (2008): 233.
- 10. Ibid., 273. 2
- 11. Misemer, "Stages of Transit," 141. 2
- 12. Jenna Loyd, Andrew Burridge, and Matthew Mitchelson, "Thinking (and Moving)
 Beyond Walls And Cages: Bridging Immigrant Justice and Anti-Prison Organizing In
 the United States," *Social Justice* 36, no. 2 (2009/2010): 91. They add: "But you must
 ask prisoners themselves to hear about how bedspace (if they have it) is not like a
 motel's pillow-top mattress, and how bedspace does not replace their bed back
 home (if they have one) and how bedspace does not replace their bed back home (if
 they have one). Here, as elsewhere, millions of imprisoned voices have been
 increasingly silenced during the penal state's ascent." (Ibid.)
- 13. Joseph Pugliese, "Civil Modalities of Refugee Trauma, Death, and Necrological Transport," *Social Identities* 15, no. 1 (2009): 149.
- 14. Ibid., 153. 2
- 15. Banda, *Hotel Juárez*, 257-8, 260.
- 16. These alternatives are all among those suggested by González Rodríguez, among others, as motives for the murders. Other proposed perpetrators include organ traffickers, organized (or disorganized) gangs, rich kids out for fun, sex offenders from across the border taking advantage of laxer enforcement in Mexico, etc.
- 17. Banda, *Hotel Juárez*, 234.
- 18. Ibid., 252, 253. 2
- 19. See Santiago Gallur Santorum, "El feminicidio en Ciudad Juárez: atando cabos," *Contralínea*, October 10, 2010, accessed April 29, 2016. http://contralinea.info/archivo-revista/index.php/2010/10/10/el-feminicidio-enciudad-juarez-atando-cabos.
- 20. Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected.* New York: NYU Press, 2013.
- 21. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2006.)

- 22. Pugliese, "Civic Modalities," 156. 🔁
- 23. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For what tomorrow . . . A Dialogue* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 90.
- 24. Banda, Hotel Juárez, 248.
- 25. See R. W. Connell and Julian Wood, "Globalization and Business Masculinities," *Men and Masculinities* 7, no. 4 (2005): 358.
- 26. Ibid., 348, 356.
- 27. Pugliese, "Civil Modalities," 195. 🖸



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Anupama Roy, "Polyrhythms of Citizenship," Lateral 5.2 (2016).

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Polyrhythms of Citizenship

Anupama Roy

ABSTRACT This talk was presented as a keynote address at the Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance Conference, January 6, 2015, at the University of Warwick. In this forty-two minute audio-essay, Roy theorizes what she calls polyrhythmic citizenship, the way the intelligibility of the concept of citizenship plays out, much like music, across different contexts and cultures. She discusses "transformative constitutionalism" and "insurgent citizenship" as the component parts of this citizenship, and takes for her key examples the founding of the Indian state and its constitution, and the Delhi gang rape case of 2012 which resulted in the death of Jyoti Singh.

Editors' note: "Polyrhythms of Citizenship," by Anupama Roy was presented as a keynote address at the Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance Conference, January 6, 2015, at the University of Warwick. In this forty-two minute audio-essay, Roy theorizes what she calls polyrhythmic citizenship, the way the intelligibility of the concept of citizenship plays out, much like music, across different contexts and cultures. She discusses "transformative constitutionalism" and "insurgent citizenship" as the component parts of this citizenship, and takes for her key examples the founding of the Indian state and its constitution, and the Delhi gang rape case of 2012 which resulted in the death of Jyoti Singh. -J.R. and M.E.F.

00:00

This audio file has been uploaded to the Internet Archive at https://archive.org/details/KeynoteRoy



Anupama Roy

Anupama Roy is Professor in the Centre for Political Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is a political scientist whose research interests straddle legal studies, political anthropology of public institutions, and women's studies. She is the author of *Gendered Citizenship: Historical and Conceptual Explorations* (2005) and *Mapping Citizenship in India* (2010), and co-editor of *Poverty, Gender and Migration in South Asia* (2008). This audio-essay has been incorporated into her latest book, forthcoming by the end of this year: *Citizenship in India*, Oxford India Short Introduction. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016.



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Shirin M. Rai and Ameet Parameswaran, "Delhi Dispatches Blogs," Lateral 5.2 (2016).

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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Delhi Dispatches Blogs

Ameet Parameswaran and Shirin M Rai

ABSTRACT Starting in February 2016, a protracted struggle has taken place on the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus, pitting the students and their faculty supporters against the rightwing government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Administration of the university. The protestors' issues chime with the desire to leverage justice that drives this issue. This piece presents one senior scholar and one early career scholar blogging about these events.

Editors' note: Starting in February 2016, a protracted struggle has taken place on the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus, pitting the students and their faculty supporters against the right-wing government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Administration of the university. The protestors' issues chime with the desire to leverage justice that drives this issue. We invited one senior scholar and one early career scholar to share their blogging about these events. -J.R. and M.E.F.

<u>Click here</u> to access a glossary of acronyms that may be unfamiliar when they appear in the texts.

Barbarians at the Gate

Shirin M. Rai

Dateline: February 15, 2016

Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.

And some who have just returned from the border say

there are no barbarians any longer.

And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

They were, those people, a kind of solution. 1

The "others" have their uses; they can be used to mobilize fear. I came to Delhi on a Visiting Professorship for three months early in 2016. This was an important step for me. I am a Delhiite—a Dilli walla; I was born here, brought up here, educated here and made friends here—and yet I had stayed away from Delhi for some years. So, this visit was an attempt to reconnect with my friends, to experience Delhi in a different way. What I didn't expect was that this different experience would also include witnessing an undemocratic attack on one of the foremost universities of India—Jawaharlal Nehru University, hereafter JNU—by a government that has obviously decided that sacrificing democratic governance to short-term electoral gain is a price worth paying. This was and continues to be an attack on freethinking citizens, on democratic spaces of education: universities and institutions that can and must leverage justice for the citizens of India without regard to hierarchies of caste, class, gender, or sexuality. The political discourse being mobilised to

carry out this attack on the university—of sedition, nationalism, and intolerance—is particularly worrying. At the same time I also witnessed the defiance of students and academics that took the form of various performances—aesthetic and political. This short piece is a record of my brief experience as a witness to important events that affect not only students of JNU but also democratic forces more broadly, in India and abroad.

The saga began with a small demonstration on February 9, 2016 by a few students to protest against the execution of Kashmiri separatist Afzal Guru, who was involved in the attack on the Indian parliament in 2001; anti-India and pro-Kashmiri secession slogans were raised at the demonstration. A group of ABVP (BJP student wing) turned up and a scuffle broke out; the JNU Students Union President Kanhaiya Kumar arrived to break this up and made a speech² critical of the BJP government: "We belong to this country. We love this country. We fight for the 80 per cent of the poor population of this country. For us, this is nation worship [...] On behalf of JNU, I want to challenge RSS ideologues. Call us and hold a debate. We want to debate the concept of violence." Before long a complaint was made to the police about the nature of the slogans and Kanhaiya Kumar was arrested on a charge of sedition. The police also raided student hostels, without any advance notice, in pursuit of students who were supposed to have been at this event. Kanhaiya was produced briefly before a magistrate and his remand was increased by two days; Kanhaiya as well as the teachers and students who went to the court to support him were beaten up, as were the journalists who were reporting the proceedings. That this violence was perpetrated by lawyers who support the BJP government and that flags and hyper-nationalist rhetoric were employed during this violence suggests that this was a planned event to discipline the students. The impunity with which they meted out violence to all who challenged them shows the confidence with which the attack on democratic rights was orchestrated.

Now, under the Indian penal code the Supreme Court specifically laid down the ruling that the provisions of section 124A (Seditions Act—a hangover from the days of the British rule) are only applicable where there is a tendency to public disorder by use of violence or incitement to violence; this provision is being increasingly used to stifle dissent against the government rather than for any incitement to the use of violence against the state (for example, a demand was made to charge Arundhati Roy for her stringent critique of government). What is equally worrying is how a particular trope of nationalism is being appropriated by the current government: immediately as the story broke, Education Minister Smriti Irani invoked "Mother India:" "We will not tolerate an insult to Mother India," she said, and since then the rhetoric has been of "deshdrohi" (traitor to the nation), of "gaddaar" (traitor) and of violent attack upon those who are labelled as such. What is happening of course is a performance of BJP claim-making, posturing as patriots while labeling the others, who oppose them, as traitors.

This claim-making was enacted on a stage which is also the most "nationalist" of spaces—as Kanhaiya Kumar was arrested, and as JNU students protested on campus, BJP mobilised a demonstration in favor of Kanhaiya's arrest at India Gate, Raj Path, where only a few days before, the Indian Republic Day was celebrated with an annual march. Over the years, this space has come to symbolize India's freedom but also its military strength. Through occupying this space, the performance of loyalty to the nation in the Republic Day parades gets folded into the politics of hate against those deemed "unpatriotic." Patriotism is of course often, as Samuel Johnson opined, the "last resort of the scoundrel"—while his biographer and friend James Boswell doesn't give us the context in which this was said, we can at least know from experience that states often mobilize fear through the language of patriotism—fear of the other, of the barbarian out there; Hobbes' Leviathan needs the state of nature to achieve compliance of citizens, and when

challenged can conjure up threats of chaos which only an absolute monarch can subdue. So, attacks on democratic dissent can then be legitimized by the state in the name of patriotism—if this is not "scoundrel-ness" then what is?

But of course this claim to patriotism has been challenged by many—by politicians who value both electoral opportunity and progressive politics, by academics who are standing by their students and contributing to their institution's history of radical critique, but most of all by the students, who have peacefully mobilized in a mature and serious way against an assault on their peers, on democratic values, and on the human rights of the citizens of India. The speeches I heard were reasoned as well as passionate, oratorical, and quiet; there have been poetry recitals, humor, singing. The solidarity being performed on the stage of the university's Administration Building feels very different from the "solidarity" we witnessed by the ABVP/BJP/RSS crowds waving saffron and black flags and shouting ugly abuse. To challenge the capture of nationalism, to make it more expansive and capacious, JNU Teachers' Union decided to organize daily "teach-ins" on the topic of nationalism—what might a democratic and secular nationalism look like? All the lectures were recorded and are available for view on the StandwithJNU Facebook group.4



Figure 1. Freedom Square, Admin. Block, JNU; photo: Shirin Rai.

India is the world's largest democracy where electoral politics, however flawed, ensure a celebration of democratic values; where people reaffirm their investment in some idea called India and where opposition takes the shape of a ballot form; where the clash of visions, ideas, and ideologies is performed in election rallies or interest mobilizations, and where the results of the election are accepted and respected. To incarcerate an elected student leader on trumped up charges, before the University can make its own inquiries, to violently attack a whole institution—discursively, through abuse and threats of violence, physically, by assaulting professors and students in court, and through police raids on hostels—is definitely not democratic and is hardly patriotic.

As I left Delhi and JNU on April 8, the struggle was still on. The charges of sedition against several students are pending in the courts, even as the students themselves are now out on bail. Kanhaiya showed his defiance in the speech he made upon his release—encapsulating courage, thoughtfulness, and humor, it was a performance of extraordinary breadth and depth. Also pending is the issue of freedom of speech; indeed, the students of JNU brought into play the issue of "aazadi" (freedom) itself when Kanhaiya declared in his speech that he was asking for freedom from oppression, not from India but in India. As in all movements, there will be ups and downs, but the citizens-in-making that these students are have shown that if the state uses performance to leverage power, so can those who challenge it—to leverage justice.

Protesting in Times of Snow 6

Ameet Parameswaran Dateline: May 11, 2016

The protest movement at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has entered a different stage, where seventeen students, led by the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU), are currently on an indefinite hunger strike against the unjust and excessive punishments meted out by the JNU administration against 19 people, primarily students and some ex-students. The punishments have been given based on a farcical inquiry process by a High Level Enquiry Committee (HLEC) instituted by the JNU administration in violation of university protocols of normal inquiry processes. The JNU community had discredited the HLEC due to its utter failure in following the procedural norms as well as the fundamental principles of natural justice. The punishments—including rustication of three students (being declared "out of bounds" for differing periods, what is elsewhere called "expulsion"), eviction from their hostel, as well as hefty fines—were declared by the administration in a calculated manner to stop the students as they postponed the final decision till the start of the end-semester examinations. The majority of the JNU community, therefore, feels that the punishments are simply a continuation of the witch-hunting of students for the critical ideological positions they uphold. The explanation of the administration that the February 9 incident was "unprecedented," and that the outside world is looking at the JNU administration to take firm action against the students has linked the declaration of the punishments of students with the logic of capital punishment meted out to Afzal Guru by the Supreme Court of India on the grounds of "satisfying the collective consciousness of the nation." As activists were arguing in the Afzal Guru case, here too, justice is being set aside for the satisfaction of a (constructed) public opinion. ⁸ As the health of the students is worsening day by day, with many already hospitalized, I record some of the challenges faced and the strategies used in protests by the students and the wider JNU community in the contemporary moment when the Hindutva right-wing central government has marked universities as the sites on which to ruthlessly intervene and transform the nation.

The Universities across India—including the Film and Television Institute of India, the Hyderabad Central University, the Allahabad University, and JNU—have been clear targets of attack in the last one and half years. Irrespective of the differences in the composition of students, geographical location, and specific reasons of protests in each of these universities, they share a similar predicament because of the violence unleashed by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) directed by the Rashtreeya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and the direct intervention of the central government to stifle critical thinking. With the attack on JNU, as Shirin Rai writes above, nationalism was established as a plank and the chanting of the slogan *bharat mata ki jai* was marked as a prime ingredient of what can be seen as a "nationalism test" that all Indians are supposed to undergo. Udaya Kumar wonderfully critiques the logic of the recent decisions of the central government such as installing "large-sized national flags" and a "military tank in display" in efforts to "help induce a spirit of nationalism" and offering a "totemic force" in transforming the universities. He argues:

Instead of critical practices that draw their energies from multiple voices and debate, an intellectual ethos of silent veneration or choric acclamation is being proposed. This model thinks of universities not as laboratories of thought but as factories where activities are performed in unison. Instead of a cohabitation of differences in friendship and respectful, heated disagreement, you have a paranoid fantasy that gets rid of all real diversity. 10

With the widespread media attention to the slogans purportedly raised at the cultural events at JNU, in the first phase of the struggle (February and March) the framing around protest assumed three interlinked but distinct matrices: to resist the attack on freedom of expression with the goal of challenging the very (colonial) law of sedition; to assert the need to question the existence of the Indian state as hegemonic sovereignty; to reclaim the autonomy of the university. The significant aspect of the first phase of the movement was that it was a response to the out-of-context reportage and overexposure of the activities in the university to the wider public, where a media trial was conducted with judgments being passed in the news rooms on the supposed "anti-nationals" in the university without any possibility for defense or debate. The fundamental questions were completely put aside: what was the context of the meeting at the university and the failures on the part of the administration? What were the tones of sloganeering and the body language used in the assembly and the continuous sloganeering and threats by the ABVP—when does speech become "sedition" by inciting violence? While direct police action and violence by self-appointed guardians of nationalism was unleashed, as scholars have argued, these acts are better understood as workings of power based on inducement and modulation of affect, rather than simply on control. ¹¹ While the national flags are replete with symbolism, in everyday life they might indeed be rather banal. For instance, JNU already has a national flag on top of its administrative building, which is inconspicuous. Yet the flag was transformed into an object which could induce the affect of veneration through media exposure for a short duration, before moving on to another object that would induce another affect.

Apart from the legal battle, the JNU community, in the form of talks, installations and performances on a site that was from then on called "freedom square," responded by offering what can be seen as a "duration" against the instantaneity of judgment in the media trial. It was, in fact, the possibility of duration for critical thinking and channeling affect that the mainstream media was prohibiting. The two series of public classes organized at the freedom square—the "Nationalism series" followed by the "Azaadi (freedom) series," (a strategy derived from the 1968 student movement), addressed the media trial at a larger level, critically interrogating the very ideas of nationalism and freedom. Students assembled at the freedom square day in and day out, making art works, posters, and cartoons, and participating in the performances and talks given by people from a wide spectrum who came every day in solidarity with the movement. The events were mostly decided on a day-to-day basis, and popularized through whatsApp groups as well as Facebook posts. All the events were recorded and posted online on the website "Stand With JNU" created for the movement, through which people who were not on site could access the events, leading also to multiple creative responses to the performances at JNU. The slogan, by the JNUSU president, Kanhaiya Kumar, "Hum kya chahte? Azaadi." ("What do we want? Freedom.") has thereby become a full-fledged performance, with people adding to "freedom" a list of other desires as well as creating their own versions of the azaadi performance. $\frac{12}{2}$ While the same slogans are often repeated multiple times in a single protest, the azaadi slogan is possibly the one slogan that asks for a "repeat" as one asks for a repetition of a song or refrain ("One more time!"). One of the happiest moments for the movement came on the night of the release from prison on bail of the two students, Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya, who were sent to judicial custody on charges of sedition. After their speeches, the assembled people did precisely that, requesting Kanhaiya Kumar to repeat the azaadi song, making the chanting in itself an expression of release and happiness beyond the inventory of things from which they were chanting that they want freedom.

While all the classes and talks in the freedom square were geared to an awareness of the wider public outside JNU, many events, especially the performances, often became a site

where an intimate public could think and exchange ideas without the limiting frames of the "national vs. anti-national." Even the formation of such a site, christened "freedom square," is linked to global modes of protests. The site is on the steps in front of the JNU administrative building, where students generally assemble to protest against the administration. The public events such as talks, performances, etc. are usually held by students in the hostel mess post-dinner or in open spaces in front of *dhabas* (tea and food shops spread across the residential area of the campus) or assigned area such as open air theatre. In an earlier protest against the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the cancellation of scholarships, the JNUSU had indeed used the "Occupy" model of agitation, calling the agitation itself "OccupyUGC" and occupying the space outside the UGC building. The Delhi police used tear gas and baton charges to break up the protestors' assembly in more than one instance. In the wake of the attack on the university in February, the steps of the administrative building have become "occupied" indefinitely, making it a site for assembling by the JNU community as well as others in solidarity to show dissent, and to address the "outside" as well as to communicate among themselves.

Importantly, the activities in freedom square took the challenge of the media trial head on: charging that it was not simply based on selective footage of the event, but indeed was a pre-planned attack using fabricated slogans by mixing audio from a different source to the visuals from the event. While many raised the slogans critical of the Indian state on February 9, many slogans that were highlighted to whip up hyper-nationalism, including "Pakistan Zindabad," have now been proved to be fabricated. 14 For many involved with the JNU movement, this was possibly a first-hand, first-time experience of being in a predicament, not simply of being charged with certain ideological positions, but in a condition where the evidence itself is manufactured. Such fabrication indeed has long been the modus operandi through which RSS has created communal riots across the country and the Indian state has found its pseudo-logic to unleash repression in places such as Kashmir. The challenge in this predicament was a double-bind: One had to reply in the negative when asked if the slogans were chanted, in order to escape prosecution; however, a negative reply takes away the possibility of having the ground to ask "what is the problem in raising critical slogans?" The activities in the freedom square, therefore, were also attempting to win back the university as an autonomous place where fundamental questions (and not necessarily answers) could be raised, without the need to explain everything to wider public. 15

As the three students who were arrested and sent to judicial custody on charges of sedition—Kanhaiya Kumar, Umar Khalid, and Anirban Bhattacharya—came out on bail and indeed managed to puncture the one-sided media discourse on nationalism with their come-back speeches at the freedom square, the thrust of the movement was shifted more strongly towards the intransigence of the JNU administration and the government's attack on the autonomy of the university. While the earlier phase was characterized by overexposure to the media, this phase of struggle by the students was completely blacked out by the media, whereby JNU shared the same condition as the other universities across the country whose situations had not been covered in the media. While the challenge in the earlier phase was indeed to produce duration to counter instantaneity and to tone down the extreme passions of nationalism, now it is exactly the opposite. One is facing an administration that has not responded to anything, where indifference has been the only response. As distinct from the need for duration, the students are now in need of an urgency of action from the administration. The freedom square where the students are lying on hunger strike is still a space for talks, performances, installations and solidarity meetings on a daily basis. With the complete media blackout, these are now popularized only through Facebook posts and WhatsApp, and documented in the "Stand With JNU" Facebook page. The Facebook pages are filled with distressing daily updates on the failing

condition of the hunger strikers, with their photographs, details of bilirubin count, ketone, and blood sugar levels. Possibly, the two extremes of the tactics of instantaneity and blackout are indeed the two sides of the same coin, working in tandem to constitute the new regime of power, to which the students are responding militantly, democratically, and creatively.

On May 10, the recently appointed Vice Chancellor of the University held his first meeting of the Academic Council (AC), the highest democratic body of decision-making in the University. The overwhelming majority of the teachers at the AC tried to impress upon him the urgency of the situation. Yet, the administration remained indifferent indifferent to morality, ethics, or protocols of the university. The Vice Chancellor (VC), who within fourteen days of taking over the university pushed it to the worst crisis in JNU's history on February 10, indeed has grandiose plans of "transforming" the university on his whim as clearly evidenced by the new authoritarian circulars issued every day. But when the AC pressured him for some action in the present crisis, instead of addressing the issue, he simply adjourned the meeting and literally ran away. One does not know how the events at JNU will unfold, nor does one know what might be an efficacious way of struggle for justice against a regime that is violently indifferent. But the struggle continues, with the hope that protests are not actions by Didi and Gogo in a Delhi version of Waiting for Godot; instead, if the regime is so ruthless and intransigent, then rather than evading, running away, or creating fabricated stories, at some point the leaders (both of the university and the country) have to confront Schweik and the debris of their own actions in the storm, before breaking into a grotesque dance and vanishing into the chilling snow.

Glossary

JNU

Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, India

BJP

Bharatiya Janata Party. One of the two largest political parties in India, alongside the Congress Party, which came to power 2014. It is a right-wing Hindu party.

RSS

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. A Hindu nationalist volunteer organization with paramilitary branches, the RSS has been involved in communal riots and has been banned three times under previous governments. It is affiliated with the BJP, and can be seen as its "attack dog." It has been implicated in anti-Muslim and Christian violence including the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, and more recently in the 2002 Gujarat riots, which Narendra Modi was also accused of initiating from his position as Chief Minister of Gujarat at the time. He has since been cleared of those charges.

ABVP

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad. A right-wing Hindu nationalist student organization affiliated with the RSS and with the BJP youth organization, Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha. It has also been implicated in violence.

Notes

- 1. Constantine P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, trans. Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, Bilingual Edition ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2009), 33.
- 2. Kanhaiya Kumar, "If Anti-National Means This, God Save Our Country," *The Telegraph*, February 16, 2016, accessed June 27, 2016
 http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160216/jsp/frontpage/story-69576.jsp#.V3Fn-pMrlo-.
- 3. Ibid. **2**
- 4. N.A, "Stand with Jnu," accessed June 27, 2016 https://www.facebook.com/standwithjnu/.
- 5. NDTV, "Out of Jail, Kanhaiya Kumar Attacks PM Modi in Speech on JNU Campus," accessed June 27, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jkQhAE-j8s.
- 6. I allude here to the interrogation of survival under fascism set out in Bertolt Brecht's 1943 play, *Schweik in the Second World War.*
- 7. The statement was made by the JNU administration in the meeting it held with the JNU teachers on May 3, 2016.
- 8. Arundhati Roy, "The Hanging of Afzal Guru Is a Stain on India's Democracy," *The Guardian*, February 10, 2013, accessed May 10, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/10/hanging-afzal-guru-india-democracy
- 9. Literally, "Hail Mother India." 🔁
- 10. Udaya Kumar, "The University and Its Outside," *Economic and Political Weekly* LI, 11 (2016): 31. 2
- 11. Ben Anderson, "Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of 'Total War," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 161-85.
- 12. The following is link of Kanhaiya Kumar's speech at the freedom square addressing the students after he was released on bail. "Azadi Slogans at Jnu-with Context," YouTube video, posted by "Arsh Farsh" March 4, 2016, accessed June 27, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnqwupVD6Ok. See, for instance, the slogan transformed in a song by Pushpavathy. "AZADI SONG_Composed & Sung by Pushpavathy," YouTube video, posted by "PUSHPAVATHY" April 7, 2016, accessed June 27, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xwVR8SDscc; or a dub smash version, "Dub Sharma Azadi | Featuring Kanhaiya and Friends {Audio}," YouTube video, posted by "Dub Sharma" February 21. 2016, accessed June 27, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NJbxEgf3Uo.
- 13. For a short analysis of *The Walk*, performed by Maya Rao three days after the arrest of Kanhaiya Kumar, and how it created a space of intimate-public, see Ameet Parameswaran, "Performance, Protest, and the Intimate-Public," *TDR/The Drama Review* 60. 2 (2016): 2-3.
- 14. One of the channels that led the vicious campaign against JNU was Zee News; the videos they aired were used by the police to charge and arrest JNUSU President Kanhaiya Kumar. On February 19 a young journalist, Viswa Deepak, who was then employed as a producer in Zee News, resigned "in protest against the role played by Zee News instigating and spreading the campaign of blind nationalism under the pretext of publicizing Kanhaiya's excess." In a resignation letter that was made public, he wrote, "The video that never had a slogan of 'Pakistan Zindabad' we ran again and again to stoke passions. How could we convince ourselves so easily that the voices in

the darkness belonged to Kanhaiya or his friends?{...} It would have been appropriate if we had let the agencies investigate the matter and awaited their conclusions." For the full transcript of the resignation letter, see Vishwa Deepak, "Zee News Journalist Quits in Disgust Over JNU Coverage, Tells All in Letter," The Wire February 22, 2016, accessed July 4, 2016, http://thewire.in/22290/zee-news-reporter-quits-in-disgustover-jnu-coverage-tells-all-in-letter/. Delhi being the capital of India does not have the full status of a state, and the Delhi police are therefore directly under the control of the Central Government, rather than the state government. Following the arrest of Kumar, the Delhi State Government under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal ordered a magisterial probe into the JNU event. The report of the inquiry submitted on March 2, 2016 concluded that two out of seven videos aired were doctored, following which the Delhi Government filed a complaint in the court against three television channels, Zee News, News X, and India News, for airing fabricated videos. For the full report, see, Teesta Setalvad, "Television as Lynch Mob: DM Report on JNU Incident raises Questions on Media Ethics," Sabrang, March 8, 2016, accessed July 2, 2016, https://sabrangindia.in/tags/delhi-govt-report. 🖸

15. For an excellent analysis of the need for an autonomous space of the university, see, Happymon Jacob and A. K. Ramakrishnan, "There's a Cop in My Class," *The Indian Express*, February 27, 2016, accessed May 9. 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/theres-a-cop-in-my-class-at-jnu/.



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Issue 5.2 (Fall 2016) — Leveraging Justice

Challenges of Praxis: ARM of Care and Kolkata Sanved

María Estrada-Fuentes, Urmimala Sarkar Munsi and Janelle Reinelt

ABSTRACT As part of our Gendered Citizenship project, we partnered or collaborated with several NGOs and theatre companies whose work is on the front lines of supporting survivors of poverty, violence, statelessness, and homelessness. We have listed these organizations and their websites in our "Further Resources" list at the end of this section. Here we share the "best practices" of two NGOs that work with survivors: one young and community-based (ARM of Care), growing quickly from a grass roots start; the other (Kolkata Sanved) engaged for twenty years to develop a substantial international reputation.

As part of our Gendered Citizenship project, ¹ we partnered or collaborated with several NGOs and theatre companies whose work is on the front lines of supporting survivors of poverty, violence, statelessness, and homelessness. We have listed these organizations and their websites in our "Further Resources" list at the end of this section. Here we share the "best practices" of two NGOs that work with survivors: one young and community-based, growing quickly from a grass roots start; the other engaged for twenty years to develop a substantial international reputation.

ARM of Care is an organization that delivers arts and movement therapy to women and young girls who have been sexually exploited, many of whom are survivors of trafficking. Based in Contra Costa County, in the bay area of Northern California, the organization is typical of many in being the product of a singular visionary woman—Amy Lynch—who has gradually built up the organization since it began in 2012. ARM of Care delivers programs to other social service agencies and NGOs that provide basic services such as shelter and food to clients whose needs range from health care and traditional mental health therapies to job training, legal services, and help negotiating with police and other officials of the State. ARM of Care offers workshops, events, and programs that focus on Art, Recreation, and Movement (ARM) as therapies that address trauma. Amy and her staff of four are specialists in these areas, and coordinate a range of programs in movement and physical practices such as Pilates and yoga as well as dance; theatre and creative dramatics; and visual arts and craft activities (see Janelle Reinelt's essay in this issue).

Besides directly relating to the women and girls who are their primary consideration, ARM of Care frequently presents public education programs to potential sponsoring organizations and to various groups of the general public, such as church groups with social justice commitments. This dual task of delivering both targeted therapies and informational and educational issue-based outreach is similar to two other organizations we worked with in the UK: Cardboard Citizens, a theatre organization that makes theatre pieces for the public about homelessness and also runs theatre classes and programs for their homeless clients; and ice&fire, which offers documentary performances to inform public policy as well as making theatre pieces with asylum-seekers and giving classes (see Maggie Inchley's essay in this issue).

Our Kolkata partner, Kolkata Sanved (KS), has grown from Sohini Chakraborty's onewoman enterprise offering Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) to survivors of sex trafficking in Kolkata in 1996. It is now a large organization that has as one of its programs a degree certificate in DMT, recognized and authorized by the government. Clients who have gone through the basic survivor's program may go on to complete this certificate, becoming therapists themselves and in turn working with other survivors. With many partners in both India and abroad, Sanved now conducts its own research evaluating the best movement-based practices for survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, as well as research on children and young adults living in shelter homes, and on organizations working on trafficking-prevention and institutions that provide vocational training and job opportunities for women of disadvantaged communities. Other important areas of work in KS are educational outreach programs and the design and implementation of DMT impact measurement methodologies. In this regard, Kolkata Sanved's collaboration and on-going partnerships with Mumbai's Tata Institute for Social Science (TISS), and its two education programs are core aspects of Sanved's vision of how dance is a relevant tool for social change. (See <u>Urmimala Sarkar Munsi's essay in this issue</u>. Also, see the appendix materials below: Estrada-Fuentes and Sarkar Munsi's "Interview with Sohini Chakraborty," and Estrada-Fuentes's "Working at Kolkata Sanved: An Intern's Perspective.")

The practical day-to-day work of these organizations is daunting in its demands, and very sophisticated in its accomplishments. These organizations work through key inquiries: how to speak to the public about seriously fraught issues such as sex trafficking, homelessness, or statelessness; how to address the ethical challenges of their work—ranging from responsibilities to clients, to responsibility for the representations of the issues, dilemmas, and experiences of the women and young girls, and the ways these vulnerable subjects are themselves represented—all of this within a market and media economy that too often creates exploitative or commodified contexts for the reception of these vulnerable subjects.

One aspect of their work is contributing to public knowledge and dialogue about both the issue of trafficking and the impact of trauma on their client victim/survivors. Another aspect is the necessity of explaining to others, who may have very little knowledge or experience of the arts, how and why arts such as dance and theatre can play a healing role in addressing trauma, particularly the kind of trauma experienced by the sexually exploited. We have been impressed with the presentations we have seen Amy and Sohini deliver in a variety of settings, and here share a slideshow from each. We have further annotated the slides to point out some of the things we think are important or interesting in these presentations.

ARM of Care





Kolkata Sanved



Editors' note: Kolkata Sanved often uses photographs of DMT practitioners who are also performers in their slides.



Appendix

We have collected here some items that highlight the practical work done by the NGOs we have worked with during the last two years: Kolkata Sanved and ARM of Care. We have also shared the experiences and insights arising from an internship at Kolkata Sanved, and provided an interview with the Founder. We wanted to make visible the work the two organizations do as educational outreach with members of the public, and finally, we offer some tools we have developed to give something back to organizations that have been generous with their time and resources.

Several organizations mentioned to us that they do not know how to field requests from other organizations, scholars, or interested persons that ask them to share their data, or give access to their organizational resources, or in some cases, to allow interviews of clients or observation of workshops and sessions. We created a comprehensive protocol as general guidance that can be adapted according to institutional needs.

The contents of this section include

- An <u>excerpt from a journal</u> kept by María Estrada-Fuentes during her internship at Kolkata Sanved in summer 2015.
- An <u>interview</u> with Sohini Chakraborty, Director of Kolkata Sanved, by María Estrada-Fuentes and Urmimala Sarkar Munsi
- A <u>protocol</u> María Estrada-Fuentes and Janelle Reinelt drafted to share with NGOs and other interested parties that would provide a way to screen potential researchers or other parties who request access to the resources of NGOs working with vulnerable populations

Working at Kolkata Sanved: An Intern's Perspective

María Estrada-Fuentes

I first visited KS in February 2015 as part of the Gendered Citizenship Project team coming from the University of Warwick and I didn't really know what to expect. I knew this organization worked using Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) in the rehabilitation of survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. I had learned that it was a successful NGO with over a decade of experience in the field, and that it collaborated with the government. Also, that survivors themselves were part of the team, some as founding members, and worked as DMT practitioners. To be honest, it all sounded a bit too good to be true.

When we arrived on that February morning we were greeted a by dozens of women, from members of administrative staff and international volunteers to DMT practitioners. During three days, we learned about their work—about KS activism and education programs and its collaboration with the government—and we were introduced to statistics of success and heard multiple "success" life-stories. We went through a short workshop so we could get an idea of how they use DMT when working with "survivors," and, overall, we learned about the "empowerment" of women through dance. We also learned that KS has a very strong policy of care and capacity-building for the DMT practitioners, and that one of their main goals in this area is to transfer skills. But what makes someone successful, I wondered. What does it mean to survive and how can subjects be empowered through art practice? What do these things really mean? How do

they transfer skills? How do they take care of practitioners? Do they really do what they claim they do?

Before leaving, I told Sohini Chakraborty that I wanted to come back to KS and do an internship with them. I told her that I had worked on NGOs, designing and implementing arts-based methodologies to assist in the social-reintegration for former child soldiers in Colombia, and that I wanted to learn more about their work. I was particularly interested in how they "transfer skills" and what they meant by it, I wanted to learn about the care and capacity building of practitioners, and also about the idea of empowerment. I was also very interested in learning more about how an arts-based rehabilitation NGO was successfully collaborating with the government. I knew from experience that these were important aspects, but extremely difficult to achieve, and they seemed to have it all figured out. So I went back for a short internship between July and August 2015.²

My internship consisted of doing a bit of everything: editing videos, writing the annual report, doing proof-reading, giving a belly dance workshop, and so on. I was filling in gaps and contributing with small tasks to the daily necessities of the NGO. But I was there to observe, to get an idea of the work routine, and to learn about care, empowerment, and skill transferring from within the organization. It was also my first Monsoon in an extremely warm city where people have very hot and extremely sweet tea. And that is how our days started: with tea.

The day at KS starts at 10 am: staff members meet for approximately thirty minutes to have tea and sometimes biscuits while they discuss the plan of the day and any relevant issues that need attention. It is also a time to brainstorm in order to tackle any individual and/or organizational problems. This daily activity is also meant to encourage creative thinking, interpersonal communication, understanding, teamwork, and management of emotions. I was briefly introduced on my first day, but no one really talked to me during the rest of it. On the second day, during teatime, Sohini told all staff members that my visit was also an opportunity for them to practice English (all conversations were in Bengali or Hindi) and told practitioners that they should take advantage of my visit. 3 KS is growing very fast, and part of that process of growth is to improve the language skills of members of staff, specially DMT practitioners who, in a couple of years, will be expected to speak English and Hindi. So part of the capacity building of DMT practitioners consists of English language classes, which they attend once a month. I told members of staff that English was not my mother tongue and that I understood how difficult it is to learn how to speak and communicate in a language that is not the same one your heart knows, and that I was happy to help in the process. Up to that point I honestly thought that only a few of my temporary co-workers spoke English, but I was wrong. My colleagues suddenly became really talkative.

On Survivors, Empowerment, and Care

From our first visit to KS we were told that DMT practitioners were also survivors. But survivors of what? In our first visit we learned that this NGO works with survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, but during my internship, I went on three different weekly sessions with practitioners: The first session was with an organization that focuses on providing an after-school space for children living in red light districts to do their homework and on preventing their recruitment into sex-trafficking networks; participants in these session were both children and teenagers. The second one was with a group of orphans living in a shelter home, where the older participant was around thirteen years old. The last session was in a foundation that provides training for women to become drivers; they contract with KS to improve the confidence and socialization skills of their clients. Participants in this last session were mostly young adults, but there were also a couple of women that could be in their mid-forties.

When I asked Sohini who were these survivors KS worked with, survivors of what, she said: "Survivors of sexual violence, abuse, exploitation. That is our major work." But we then discussed that KS was presenting itself as working almost exclusively with survivors of sexual trafficking, which is not entirely accurate. The methodology developed by Sohini and her associates is heavily informed by her work with survivors of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, which started in 1996. But, over the years, Kolkata Sanved has demonstrated that their work not only helps trafficking survivors, but also a broad range of vulnerable communities in a wide age range and with no gender limitations, sometimes working with men as well as women. In the classroom male and female bodies interact as equals, they support and respect each other in the creative process. So, Sanved's DMT practitioners are survivors from all these different communities as well.

I also asked Sohini about how they conceive empowerment in KS. I said that during my first visit to KS I thought that the use of the word "empowerment" was probably part of a strategic jargon they used in order to attract donors. But I also told her that I quickly realized, back then, that this word meant something else, and I could not really pin down the meaning or intent. It seemed to me that for KS empowerment was a realization of the self, the process of reaching an understanding of dignity, care, and respect for one self. "Yes, it is about life," she said, "it is about discovering care, support, gratitude. Everything." Accordingly, empowerment is not something that you achieve: it is a process that KS facilitates, but cannot guarantee. However, a way for Kolkata Sanved to contribute to staff members' empowerment is through care practices and capacity-building. Providing English-language classes is part of this process, but so also is the monthly group counseling sessions DMT practitioners attend. In KS they know that the physical and mental well-being of their staff translates into delivering high-quality service, and they invest in this aspect. They also provide opportunities for training and working with DMT experts, dancers, musicians, and theatre practitioners. The Training of Trainers and Certificate programs are also part of this empowerment/skill transfer duo.4

Closing Thoughts

Spending ten days in an organization provides a very limited insight into their practices, and this brief entry is just that. And while my co-workers spoke English, I would have been able to learn much more had I been able to speak or understand Bengali. However, I was in Kolkata Sanved not only as an academic, but also as a practitioner. During my first visit I was very impressed with how this organization seemed to be so aware of the importance of taking care of members of staff, and I wanted to see how they managed to put their verbal intentions into practice. So I focused on the small details that could provide some answers to my initial questions, and I found them in daily iterations and communal practices.

As I practitioner, I had not experienced something like this: when working with former combatants, my physical and mental well-being was my own responsibility, and I most sincerely believed that was the way it should be. And this is also the case for thousands of practitioners around the world who are subject to tenuous contracts and exploitative labor-practices. It needn't be like this. Working with vulnerable and at-risk communities is demanding, and it is absolutely crucial for organizations to *take care* of those who *practice care*. And so I was very grateful with Kolkata Sanved for being aware of this, and for making an effort to deliver high quality care to staff and clients alike. I was also very impressed with the generosity of the organization in terms of capacity-building. KS is not interested in keeping the knowledge to itself; quite the opposite. This NGO believes in sharing the knowledge and creating opportunities for replicating their own practices of success and as such they have invested in creating education programs and intra-

Interview with Sohini Chakraborty

María Estrada-Fuentes and Urmimala Sarkar Munsi

Sohini Chakraborty is Founder Director of Kolkata Sanved (KS), a West-Bengal based NGO that uses Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) in the social rehabilitation of survivors of human trafficking, sexual violence, and abuse. KS also implements its therapeutic methodology and services in shelter homes, orphanages, and in red light districts in order to prevent the recruitment of children into sex-trafficking networks. This organization has also built links with foundations and institutions which provide training and job opportunities for women from marginalized communities.

Since its early stages Kolkata Sanved has aimed at transferring skills to their target populations and clients. Part of this intention has resulted in two different education programs: the Trainer of Trainers (TOT) program and the DMT Certificate course. The TOT (2012) is a two-year program that combines theoretical training and practice, and prepares graduates to work as DMT practitioners. Students are selected from the multiple groups and communities Sanved works with. The Certificate course (2013) is a one-year DMT practitioner training program that is taught in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai. This interview offers an insight into the practice and implementation of DMT, inter-institutional collaborations, and the challenges and strategies of Kolkata Sanved.

Could you talk about aspects of trauma that DMT addresses?

Trafficking survivors suffer from several kinds of physical trauma. Actual physical problems like sexually transmitted diseases, suicidal tendencies, and often long lasting ailments from malnourishment, self-abuse/harming tendencies, excessive smoking or drinking and related physical consequences. But they also suffer from severe mental trauma. One of the most common effects is the negative body image and low self-esteem that most of the survivors have. Violent anger as well as several forms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are common among these women. PTSD occurs as a result of a constant threat of abuse or actual abuse, and a sense of inevitability that may point towards the continuous slave-like situation forced by the economic dependence on the profession, actual and real threat to life, [and] a constant fear of assault and fatigue.

PTSD is twofold: on one side the person shuts out the outside world, while on the other the person might be hyperactive. This disorder has three main types of symptoms: (1) Withdrawal from social interactions and difficulty in communication resulting from fear of reminder of the past. (2) It also often creates different forms of negative sexuality. (3) Retraumatization, and heightened arousal and anxiety. PTSD may develop in some of the survivors even long after their rescue and rehabilitation, or sometimes is a recurrent disorder that they have to cope with and learn how to manage as it often comes back time and again for the rest of their lives. In such conditions psychological reactions, often uncontrollable by the survivor herself, could result in severe depression, excessive and recurrent guilt, uncontrollable mood swings, sudden feelings of fear and anger—this is part of a normal human reaction to overwhelming experiences. Some of the symptoms are long-term while others may be short-term, and easier to treat/address with the help of counseling and Dance and Movement Therapy (DMT). Most people who experience trauma also have very low communication skills, and assertive communication as a tool for survival becomes one of the goals that DMT helps them achieve. This becomes

extremely helpful in their dealings with the outside world, especially when having to do with court proceedings, the police, and health officials.

Why is dance therapy a powerful tool for helping survivors of trafficking and other sexual violence? How does it address the body and the mind? Is there in Indian culture and dance anything particularly specific to how this works? Could you talk about some examples from your experience and practice that have been important for the framing of a functioning therapy program?

Dance, as a physical activity, creates a sense of happiness and pleasure. Flexibility increases, and so does one's relationship with one's own body. Kinesthetic knowledge and awareness are also enhanced. The creative process used in DMT is a non-judgmental process, and so it contributes to building confidence and encourages initiative-taking among participants. Its artistic character enhances positive thinking and anger management capabilities.

The *free dance* technique that we use very often in our sessions motivates participants to join in the act of moving and letting go to rhythm while using un-choreographed movements. It is important to think of it as a freedom-generating dance, that helps to attain psychological states of being and feeling free, even if for a very short while to begin with. It also aims at breaking barriers of communication and providing ways of relaxation.

Healing touch is the other technique we use quite often which is extremely popular with all survivors we work with. It is a simple but directed technique that we have been using for working with trauma survivors. It consists of direct physical contact aimed at generating a feeling of communion which also gives the survivors a sense of belonging, safety and well-being. The idea of the healing touch and the way we implement it results from adopting ways in which touch is used in Eastern cultures, and has been very useful as a tool for us since it helps trauma survivors cope with the immense sense of disrespect most of them have for themselves, especially survivors from sex trafficking. This technique is very popular with girls living in shelter homes, even if it is difficult for many of them to relax and respond positively to the process in the beginning. As they grow accustomed to these sessions, all of them want to experience the healing touch.

For us in Kolkata Sanved, many of the processes of therapy have developed over twelve years of experience. Many therapeutic tools used in the West in DMT serve as our principal reference, but we also use our own cultural knowledge coming from Indian forms of dance practices that we are familiar with. Circle and semi-circles are the very basic structures of Indian community dances that are part and parcel of life. It generates a sense of belonging, a sense of communion and is an excellent tool for us to start any form of group activity.

I started with dance and sociology in 1996 and then I wanted to learn more about what other people were doing in the world, and I found DMT. But I decided that I would develop my own model. I acknowledge the Western practice, and I have received training, but I did not go to the university to study it. So my position is that India has a lot of healing elements from dance, yoga, lots of things. So I paved my way. I am still working on the methodology and the process. In my doctoral studies I am working towards establishing the Sampoornata model. Sampoornata means fulfillment and I intend for participants and practitioners to find freedom, potential, empowerment through the entire process. There have been many ups and downs, you know, we take one step forwards and then two steps back.

The hand gestures from Indian dance vocabularies give us tools for non-verbal communications. The eye-hand coordination and motor skill that comes out of such coordination increases concentration among many other benefits. The basic idea within

the realms of dance is a saying from the old Sanskrit texts, which says: "where the hand goes, the eyes follow; where the eyes go the mind follows; and thus a meaning is generated." Expressing pent-up feelings and increasing social skills result from such exercises. The foot-work from different Indian dance styles and the basic steps from different dance grammars work for releasing anger and anxiety.

What goals do arts like dance enable you to achieve for the specific physical/mental states of survivors?

What we have identified as a principal goal is restoring smile through dance and restoring a positive self-image. We have to start addressing both the physical and the mental states through the survivors' bodies. Some exercises are physical—which lead to a certain opening up of the mind, and creating positivity. Some exercises start with mental habits such as concentration, focus, and memory. This then leads to certain physical and psychological results like the rise in energy levels, the ability to laugh loudly and smile, and also to be confident about touch and proximity with other bodies. Our principal goals are:

- To develop skills to cope with negativity and self-image issues that create situations of re-traumatization
- To develop skills to relax and help others do the same
- To help the survivors to start to address negativities from within and recognize the need to be positive
- To help them improve their images of self, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and confidence in themselves and their own bodies
- To improve social communication skills and develop abilities to adjust to changing social settings, away from a life where one is always on guard, to come to adjust to where one is expected to be a neighbor, a colleague, or at least an equal member of society
- To help develop mechanisms to identify depression and deal with anxiety and stress,
 by introducing survivors to easily usable "tools" from DMT
- To be able to acknowledge emotions and deal with restlessness and hyper-arousal
- Throughout the working process we continue to create a regime of trust-building exercises

Visible effects often are:

- Moving from depressed presence (eg. sitting in isolation, or listless gait) to free movement, showing happiness, smiling, taking part in recreation and fun
- Physical confidence
- Eye contact
- In dance—the immediate, and first visible thing is a change-over from closed body to an open body posture
- Significant increase in movement range capacity

How hard is it to do this work and how important is it for funders and others to sustain support for it, even if it doesn't move quickly or get results every time?

Rehabilitation is understood in different ways; NGO shelters and government shelters have very different approaches to it, and Kolkata Sanved has to take on both. It is important to stress that this work is difficult. There is no sure-success formula to it as we are dealing with extremely fragile lives that do not usually get any other support from society. Hence there is no promise of support from any other source, like family or relationships that can help these survivors to feel positive consistently. They often go back to their old situations not once but time and again, or they stop coming to therapy sessions altogether. There are very few resources to build a different life and Kolkata Sanved has to remain the principal support organization, even after some of them recover

sufficiently and start settling down in regular jobs and rebuild their families. Sometimes a stray incident may trigger re-traumatization for survivors who appear totally recovered. It is difficult to generalize and talk about "progress" in a year, as the process of recovery is different and the pace is very individual in nature. But one can easily say that in one year all survivors come to know and experience what tools are available for recovery, even if they cannot generate the processes themselves at times of need. It is however, not possible at all to ensure that, when in need, they will all access these tools in the same ways. One thing that keeps us working is that most of the re-traumatized women who have left the program have come back and sought help again.

Recently, a highly talented survivor was offered a job outside Kolkata Sanved as a dancer and a DMT trainer. After trying to work for some time with the organization, she has completely withdrawn from everything and left this job which she herself chose to take on. Trauma cycle is a self-generating process. It is a life-long process of recovery. This young woman left to start her new job, hopeful and seeming totally confident as an individual, and ready to take care of everything, then she returned after three months, withdrawn and shattered. She seems to have given up on life. It is difficult enough to cope as a survivor. We need to imagine surviving as a life-graph: one that helps us understand that it is a cyclical process of "trauma-coming-out-of-trauma" that repeats for as long as one lives.

There are incidents of re-traumatization that Sanved has to cope with constantly. Therefore it has to continue its efforts to communicate and explain this cycle, the precarity of these lives, and the need for building a post-recovery network to the funders and the administrative authorities in the shelter homes.

How do you assess the recovery process and determine if/whether survivors are building strength and turning the corner on recovery?

The *Trauma symptom check list* is a survey/study that we have been implementing with 43 survivors living in one NGO shelter home and one government shelter home (2015–2016). The study focuses on anger, PTSD, and sexual matters of concern within a control group, and the treatment they receive during a six-month period. We start with a baseline, and then progress to mid-process indicators and final results. This study consists of questionnaires designed for survivors of traumas related to childhood or adult experiences. As indicated, it evolves over a period of time and addresses a series of questions proposed by trained professionals. Through this particular study we are trying to establish a process by which we may be able to understand the recovery process, and its long-term as well as short-term impact on survivors of sexual violence.

How did you start collaborating with the government and how has the process been for you at Kolkata Sanved?

It has been a really long process, so I will say that it is not just me but it has been a team effort. Collaboration is the strategy of our organization; since we started we were thinking that the government would be our partner. In our early stages we collaborated with other NGOs, and we still do, but we were all very focused on targeting the government because they make final decisions regarding policy. And, as we work in institutional rehabilitation, it is clearly important for us to work with government institutions so to bring change in psychosocial rehabilitation, using dance. So that is how we started communicating with the government in 2008 and we submitted a formal proposal for permission to work with them, not for a grant because initially if you ask for a grant then they will say there are no funds available. The government provides many grants for shelter, food, and all those things, but not that many grants in innovation. So that is why we were also clear that we would be raising funds from other areas, and that we wanted to be working with the government in a much more integrated way. After a

year of dialogue with the government director of Social Welfare, we received permission to work with three shelter homes. The government told us that Kolkata based shelter homes are always in a prime situation because lots of NGOs are there, and that there were not many NGOs going outside of Kolkata. Most importantly, outside of Kolkata they were unable to provide additional support, such as counseling and the like. And so they asked us if we were willing to go outside of Kolkata, and we agreed. After discussion, we picked up just two of the three shelter homes we were authorized to work with. We started with our own initiative, but our work was very unstructured: we were not able to go every month and funding was a big issue. So we were building a kind of base during the first two years, from 2008 to 2010, and by the end of those two years we could apply to a big donor agency. We wanted to show evidence, to be able to say "change has been seen." So, since 2010 we have been receiving funding from UK-based Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

After receiving this initial grant, we were able to structure the program, and we increased the frequency of our visits and the wages of our DMT practitioners. We could build a comprehensive framework for our practice with research, regular meetings, improved communication, supervision, monitoring of our activities, all these things we were able to do with the funding. We received much support from our donor, also with writing and submitting our reports to them. Our liaison with the government changed as well: we had four or five roundtable meetings with government officials. All this was possible due to the grant we received. Without funds you cannot make this happen, bringing all the government people together. But by that time we also changed our strategy, so that if we run a program working with children in a government shelter home, we work directly with care providers by teaching them our methodology. Working with the care providers is a bottom-up level strategy; it is also child-centered because for the children care providers are their close circle, followed by other state officials and then the NGOs. So we started working with the entire cycle, and I think this was very successful. Then we implemented our Training of Trainers Program. Our idea was that at least one shelter home could become a model.

What did "structuring" your work consist of, and what did you communicate to the government about this process?

We followed several steps: we first conducted a baseline study, a feasibility study, so we could establish from where we would be building. And then we followed with regular monitoring and evaluations in connection with the Child Welfare Committee. In our entire organization our strategy is collaboration, networking, documentation of the process, and continuous learning. So all these areas were there during our impact assessment.

In Kolkata Sanved you work with persons who are changing the perception of themselves and their lives, but you are living in this context that does not necessarily change at the same pace. How is it for them to go and find jobs and guarantee their financial sustainability outside of the shelter homes and beyond your own program? Thank you for asking this question. Now, after ten years of work we are in a second curve of our journey. The market for DMT practitioners is very small; it is just emerging in India and in the next five to seven years one of our priorities will be to create a market so that people can get jobs outside of Kolkata Sanved. We have started a partnership with Mallika Sarabhai and the Darpana Academy for Performing Arts, and two of our DMT practitioners were offered a one-year scholarship and additional two-year employment opportunity. Some foundations have expressed interest in creating placements for our DMT practitioners. We also have our academy in partnership with the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai, and we offer two types of training: one is the Training of Trainers program, which is for survivors who want to

become DMT practitioners, and the other one is the DMT certificate course. Of the first certificate cohort, 65% found jobs, but we need to keep working on this.

Our Certificate program has been very successful, as the participants find their own jobs after finishing this program. Through its Training of the Trainers program (TOT), Kolkata Sanved has helped these people to set up programs on their own. In many shelter homes there are no provisions for any counseling and anger managing tools, but DMT actually works with that. Many of Kolkata Sanved trainers work either with our team or as individuals in such places.

Currently in our Mumbai program a group of six women from one of our neighboring countries, rescued and lodged in a government sponsored shelter home, are being given a basic version of TOT, along with a self-care program. They want to work with DMT in their home country as soon as they are sent back.

In Cooch Bihar (West Bengal) at a government shelter home, the women who have gone through the DMT process are getting the training of the trainers now. They have started a DMT unit themselves and are being provided support by Kolkata Sanved trainers currently, but are moving towards taking initiative to run the program themselves independently.

How do you negotiate with the donors? There is this issue of choosing the words to talk about your work: survivor instead of victim, empowerment and so on. How do you manage expectations and your own interests when working with donors?

I think our entire program is characterized by a rights-based approach. We do not believe in charity. We believe in fulfillment and we want to transfer skills. So I think that when we choose to treat survivors not as victims but as individuals who had an incident in their life and who are entitled to their rights, we work for them not to be further marginalized. So now, what is our work? Our work is to transfer skills using dance and dance movement therapy to enable them to go from powerless to powerful, empower them so they can make decisions, choose, dream, be leaders. So they can decide what they want to do. I think this entire approach is very different. Even as a person, myself, I also think that I am an assertive person and it is very clear to other people what I am saying. I am not aggressive, but I am very assertive and it is clear to me what I want to convey. I want to convey: "You see, this is our entire organizational work, and this is how we want to move. If you want to work with us, we have to go equally." So if you are a donor we do not see any relationship from here to there [Sohini moved her hands suggesting vertical powerrelationships]. We are equals, we work in partnership. That is why we are constantly learning from each other. We do not go out thinking "Oh my god, what will happen now, what will they [the donors] do?" So it is more like from the beginning we ensure that the relationship will be in partnership, even if the donor is distant, but the relationship will be there. They are part of our movement because Kolkata Sanved is among the leaders in this field using DMT in psychosocial rehabilitation, I think that I can say internationally. So that is why part of our contribution is to think, how can we bring more people on board: DMT for change, so people start thinking about it.

Reference:

Diana M. Elliot and John Briere, "Sexual abuse trauma among professional women: Validating the Trauma Symptom Checklist-40 (TSC-40)," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 16.3 (1992): 391-398.

Suggested Protocol for Screening Potential Researchers

This protocol was conceived as a tool for both researchers and members of institutions who work with vulnerable subjects. It might seem like a long protocol, but some institutions, especially government institutions, do expect interested researchers to be able to submit thorough applications. The application is just the first step of a series of dialogues, close readings, and revisions of the request for support documents until the actual research can start. We think this protocol will be a useful tool for researchers to think through issues they might not have considered, in order to realize and establish where they stand in relation to several important aspects such as motivations for conducting the work, safety, confidentiality, and ethics. Building on this last issue, it encourages practitioners to think about what they will be giving back to the organizations they intend to work with. How does research benefit the communities in the long term?

While the NGOs we have worked with during the Gendered Citizenship project understand, in one way or the other, the "language of the arts," these are not a majority. Many organizations working on social development, aspects of transitional justice, the restoration of rights, migration, and law enforcement are not familiar with the ways in which the arts can contribute to and improve their own work. This protocol includes questions which are of common concern when such organizations are deciding whether or not to authorize research to be conducted. It is a great challenge and an opportunity to start finding ways to reach a mutual understanding. We hope this protocol will contribute to that process.

GUIDELINES TO REQUEST SUPPORT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [NAME OF INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION]*

[Name of organization] expresses its interest in supporting research projects that provide conceptual or methodological contributions to improve the situation of [type of community/ies the organization works with] in [country/county/city and/or region]. Research support requests received at [name of organization] will be submitted for consideration by the [department/area of the organization that is in charge of evaluating the proposals, e.g., board of directors, staff, or a committee such as the research committee, the ethics committee, external liaison committee, etc.]

This request for support is the first step to establish a direct link with potential researchers, institutions and/or universities and to reach consensus on topics of interest that [name of organization] considers a priority to strengthen and help fulfill its mission and in order to generate valid and relevant knowledge that can improve the situation of [type of community/ies the organization works with] and services offered by our organization to assist them.

Given the nature of the target population of [name of organization], it is a priority for the organization to establish a relationship of trust that ensures reliable information management and adheres to our ethical standards, in order to safeguard the integrity of the participants. We therefore request the elaboration of the following guidance protocol for the submission of proposals to study, interview, or assess our organization or its clients.

COVER PAGE

Title

- Researcher or researchers in charge
- Name of study or research project (the title should be short and clear; it should
 include the subject of the investigation, indicate the target population and
 temporary location of the study).

1. PROBLEM DEFINITION AND RATIONALE (1000 words limit)

Description of the problem or issue identified to be studied:

This section consists of a complete, accurate and clear description of the nature and extent of the problem/issue to be investigated. You shall include:

- Known and unknown aspects of the problem
- Aspects of inquiry about the problem.
- How and in what dimension does this project affect the development of methodologies to assist [type of community/ies the organization works with]?

Background and other research on the subject (1000 words limit)

- Studies that have been done previously or are being conducted on the subject.
- Identify why and how the study proposed is needed to complement or contribute to the existing body of knowledge.
- Which will be the population studied and what kind of study/intervention is proposed.
- How can this study influence the improvement of the situation to assess.
- How and why [name of the organization] would benefit from this study.

[Other option: Suggest instead a focus on the researcher and question about background qualifications and ongoing or past work in this area including academic, volunteer, practical, or theoretical involvement.]

2. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL PURPOSE: In a sentence, what will be done and for which purpose, according to the problem identified above.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: Describe the steps planned to reach the overall goal. Include a methodological description that explains what kind of research you intend to conduct. Please include the steps that will be used, techniques, methods, and tools for data collection. (500 words limit)

3. THEORETICAL

If you are working in an academic context, provide an explanation of the theoretical context in which research is located. (1000 words limit)

4. HYPOTHESIS

Describe what the study is intended to prove or support (if applicable).

5. ETHICAL ISSUES

If the applicant is affiliated with a university, and the research request involves human subjects, it must first be reviewed and approved by an ethics committee before being presented to [name of organization]. This committee must be from a recognized University or Research Institute. Without this approval we will not consider any request. However, if the project is limited to a review of documents (work files) it is sufficient to provide a record of commitment in relation to the confidentiality of the data requested from [name of the organization].

- **5.1 Ethical Considerations:** Briefly describe the ethical considerations involved in this research project and the mechanisms that will be used to address them. **(300 words limit)**
- **5.2 Recruitment of Participants:** Please a) specify how potential participants will be selected, b) identify the criteria for inclusion/exclusion, explaining the purpose behind that criteria, and, c) confirm that participants will not be coerced to participate in your study with payments or other incentives. **(500 words limit)**
- **5.3 Informed Consent:** Except in the case of those questionnaires where the return of a completed questionnaire is considered as a sign of consent, the informed consent of the participants is a requirement. Please indicate below the process by which you will ensure that you have obtained full consent. If your research involves children, please provide details regarding when and how will this consent be achieved. Also disclose any relevant information where an influential relationship exists between the researcher/recruiter and potential participant.
- **5.4 Vulnerable Participants:** If your research involves the direct participation of vulnerable subjects, please indicate why their inclusion in the study is a requirement and how you will protect the rights of these participants.
- **5.5 Data Protection:** Please specify how you will ensure the confidentiality of information that may lead to identifying/recognizing individual participants.
- **5.6 Incentives/Compensation:** If the travel/accommodation/other (i.e food) will not be paid to participants, this fact must be clearly explained to those participating in advance. Please indicate here any payment to be made to participants as reimbursement for travel expenses/accommodation/other and clearly justify any additional payment to the participants.
- **5.7 Benefit/Risk Participant:** Please highlight the potential benefits for participants and any damage/potential risk to those participants that may arise from their participation in the study. Where risks have been identified/potential damage, please indicate the measures taken to minimize/monitor them.

6. RESEARCH TEAM

Presentation of each team member working with brief description of their role. Attach CV if appropriate.

7. EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACT

The researcher shall specify the expected theoretical outcomes of the study and practical applications (impact). This section should describe the final format resulting from the research that will be delivered to [name of organization]. Any additional benefits of this project likely to accrue to the organization should be mentioned here.

[These may not be known in advance]

8. DISSEMINATION AND USE OF RESULTS

Specify the mechanisms that will be used to disseminate the results of research:

- Publication of articles in national and international journals.
- Publication of books, brochures, presentation seminars, forums, courses, and conferences academic and non-academic level.
- Workshops, oral presentations to other groups, blogs, newspaper editorials, or other public sphere dissemination.

List of literature cited in the document if appropriate.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

10.1 Identify facilities, equipment, and materials required in the investigation (when applicable).

10.2 Work Schedule: You must submit the work schedule.

10.3 Mention all funding sources supporting your research and an estimated total amount of support involved (both monetary and in-kind).

Sources used to elaborate this protocol:

- Theatre and Performance Studies Postgraduate Research Ethics Review Form, University of Warwick (UK).
- Guidelines to request support to conduct research at the Colombian Agency for Reintegration (Colombia).
- Guidelines to request support to conduct research at the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (Colombia).

Further Resources

ARM of Care (US): http://armofcare.net/

Cardboard Citizens Theatre Company (UK): https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/

ice&fire Theatre Company (UK): http://iceandfire.co.uk/

Kolkata Sanved (India): http://www.kolkatasanved.org/

Notes

- 1. Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance was a two-year project involving roughly equal numbers of faculty and graduate students from Warwick and JNU, and included selected other UK and Indian colleagues as well, totaling about twenty participants. It was funded by UKIERI (UK-India Education and Research Commission, UK), and UGC (University Grants Commission, India) on their "Thematic Partnership" scheme, with additional support from both universities. It ran from 2014–2016. A collection of essays under the project name will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017, edited by Bishnupriya Dutt, Janelle Reinelt, and Shrinkhla Sahai. For more information on the project, visit the website https://genderedcitizenshipandperformance.wordpress.com.
- 2. Interns at KS are expected to stay for a minimum of three months so they can get a better sense of how the organization works. After several email exchanges and a Skype interview, Sohini Chakraborty and other staff members kindly allowed me to come on a ten-day internship as part of the larger Gendered Citizenship project.
- 3. Thinking back to the months and weeks preceding my internship it was absolutely impossible for me to attend a course to get a very basic understanding of either Hindi or Bengali. But I think that for a future visit I will be able to plan better and include language training as part of the process. It is important to do so.
- 4. See <u>Interview with Sohini Chakraborty</u> in this issue for information on these programs.

å Bio

María Estrada-Fuentes

María Estrada-Fuentes is an Early Career Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Warwick. Her research interests are conflict transformation, peace-building, applied theatre, politics and performance. She has worked with government institutions and NGOs implementing theatre, dance and performance practice in the social reintegration of ex-combatants in Colombia. Her publications include "Performing Bogotá: Memories of an Urban Bombing" (in Performing Cities, ed. Nicolas Whybrow, 2014), and "Becoming Citizens: Loss and Desire in the Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants in Colombia" (in Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance, eds. Bishnupriya Dutt, Janelle Reinelt and Shrinkhla Sahai, forthcoming 2017).

å Bio

Urmimala Sarkar Munsi

Urmimala Sarkar Munsi is Associate Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is specialized in Dance Studies, Visual Anthropology and living traditions. She is a dancer and a choreographer, and currently the Vice President of the World Dance Alliance – Asia Pacific. She has published extensively, and her current research interests are politics of performance, gender and dance, and performance as research.

≜ Bio

Janelle Reinelt

Janelle Reinelt is Emeritus Professor of Theatre and Performance at University of Warwick. Her recent books include *The Grammar of Politics and Performance*, edited with Shirin Rai (2014), and *The Political Theatre of David Edgar: Negotiation and Retrieval* (2011) with Gerald Hewitt. She was President of the International Federation for Theatre Research from 2004-2007, and received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society for Theatre Research in 2010. She has been co-PI with Bishnupriya Dutt on the Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance research project.